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CHRIST IN ETERNITY AND TIME

BASSETT.

CHRIST IN ETERNITY AND TIME.

FOUR SERMONS,

PREACHED ON THE SUNDAYS IN ADVENT, 1870,
AT THE OLD CHURCH, WIDCOMBE, BATH.

I. Christ in the Bygone Eternity.
II. In the Old Testament Period.
III. In the New Testament Period.
IV. Christ in the Future Eternity.

BY

F. TILNEY BASSETT, M.A.

MORNING LECTURER.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

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TO THE CONGREGATION OF THE

OLD PARISH CHURCH, WIDCOMBE, BATH,

AT WHOSE REQUEST

THE FOLLOWING SERMONS ARE PUBLISHED,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY THEIR FAITHFUL BROTHER IN

CHRIST JESUS.

PREFACE.

SOME apology for publishing these Sermons is needed. During the course of their delivery, a request was made by members of the congregation that they should be placed in their hands in a permanent shape. This desire was accompanied with such an act of generosity that refusal was rendered impossible.

The Sermons were delivered without manuscript. The following pages have been reproduced from private notes and memory. Some amplifications have been introduced in a few places.

The subject is vast, and would supply material for volumes; a meagre outline is all that could be attempted. The endeavour has been to elucidate the all-important doctrine of the God-man, not only by texts usually adduced, but also by some of the more hidden testimonies, which, although less obtrusive, when brought to light furnish an unexpected and welcome evidence. A few notes have been appended where absolutely necessary, to supply further information on some points which could not be fully discussed in the text.

No one is more conscious than the writer of the many deficiencies under which these addresses labour. He commends them, however, in all their unworthiness to the blessing of that Lord whose glory it is their object to promote in these days of doubt and denial of the truth.

F. T. B.

59, *Pulteney Street,*
January, 1871.

I.

CHRIST IN THE BYGONE ETERNITY.

PROVERBS VIII. 22.

"*The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way.*"

TO-DAY is Advent Sunday, the new year's day of the Church of Christ. Once again the annual cycle of our religious services has accomplished its revolution and carried us through the round of the various doctrines and duties of the Christian faith. Once more we stand upon the threshold of the temple and another year of grace opens the gates of the sanctuary to disclose the mysteries of the kingdom and to receive the worship of the faithful. The solemn season demands a solemn theme. These are days, my brethren, of great religious excitement. It is no secret that, amongst all classes, as is

apparent in much of our popular literature, the doctrines of Revelation are attracting to themselves a large share of public attention, that the Scriptures are being sifted and put upon their trial. Caiaphas and Pilate again sit on the judgment seat, and Christianity is placed at the bar. The mysteries of the Essence and Person of our adorable Lord are being in many quarters profanely assailed, like the ark that typified him, by Philistine unbelief, or subjected to the unsanctified scrutiny of a godless rationalism, and the results of this agitation are visible in the unbelief and misbelief of multitudes around us. At such a time, when the minds of men are wavering or turning giddy on the brink of perversion, our own souls stand in need of a bracing and tonic treatment, of strengthening and stablishing in the fundamentals of the faith. I trust, therefore, that the choice of subjects for our Advent course this year will not prove unacceptable or unedifying. Having regard, then, to these dangers of our times and the necessity of recurring to first principles, we invite you to search the Scrip-

tures and investigate their testimony concerning Christ—Christ in the bygone eternity, Christ in the Old Testament period, Christ in the New Testament, and Christ in the future eternity. To the first named of these subjects we shall dedicate this morning. In prosecuting the task, we feel that we are loosing our moorings from all the associations of time and are setting sail on a voyage of exploration into the ocean of eternity, that immeasurable vast that is bounded by no limits and knows no shore; or we may compare ourselves to travellers going on a pilgrimage into the regions of absolute duration, where the marks and milestones that register the distances of our puny times and seasons have never found a place. The thought of a bygone eternity is as stupendous to the finite mind as, and perhaps even more so than, that of an eternity to come. We are borne in our backward course on the wing of imagination through the ages that are past till history grows dim, or the lispings of its infancy are inaudible and unintelligible, before prophets predicted and before patriarchs were born and blessed;

before Adam stood in solitude upon the soil of Eden and gazed with wonderment upon the sun and star-lit sky; and further yet, before the crusts and layers of this old world of ours were folded and pressed together, before the sun was pinned down upon his central socket, or the stars riveted on their burning pivots; further still, into the depths of duration before aught that lives and moves in heaven above or earth beneath had dropped from the fingers of God, till if we can conceive it, God was alone in awful solitude, the "I am." It was then in that deep, dark, unutterable distance, that baffles the plumbline of man's imagination to gauge, that inspiration has revealed to us the co-existence with the Father, of the Word and Wisdom of God. "Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of His way."

May the Holy Ghost strengthen and enlighten our minds that we may understand the mysteries of God!

Our first duty will be to enquire what is the construction and true interpretation of our text, as this verse, under various translations, has ever been considered one of

cardinal importance in connection with the doctrine of the pre-existence of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently of His Deity or true divinity. Each word, therefore, that helps to compose this text must be of corresponding importance in forming our judgment of the true meaning of the whole.

In the first place it must be noted that the preposition "in," "*in* the beginning of his way," does not exist in the original, but as in some passages it is requisite to supply this expletive to conform the idiom of the Hebrew language to our own, it was thought by our translators that such a necessity existed in this place, but if we omit this interpolation and read the word "beginning," in apposition to "me," the sense yielded will be more lucid and more in agreement with the original, "Jehovah possessed me—the beginning of His way." The next word to which we would request your careful attention is "possessed." It is undoubtedly true that the verb has this signification, but it is equally certain and unquestionable that this is its secondary and not its primary meaning,

and that it cannot be its proper equivalent in our text will be at once apparent, when I add that when it signifies possession it is possession by *acquirement*. Such a rendering, therefore, as "the Lord acquired" wisdom, carries with it its own refutation.

The radical meaning of the Hebrew word in this place is to "beget."[1] It is the original of many words in other languages, both ancient and modern, that are the vehicles of the same idea, giving us in our own tongue such words as *generation*, *kin* and *kind*. We may pause an instant to substantiate this view by the citation of several texts where this word occurs under different translations in our version. In Genesis iv. 1, Eve exclaims at the sight of her first-born, "I have gotten, *i.e.*, begotten a man." In Genesis xiv. 19, we read that Melchizedek blessed the patriarch Abraham in the name of God, "the *possessor* of heaven and earth;" if we substitute the "acquirer in the place of the "possessor," a glance will satisfy us that it is not the intended signification, but the Begetter or Creator of heaven *and earth* was evidently the thought which

was in the mind of the great high Priest of Salem. We will adduce one more reference, from the book Deuteronomy, ch. xxxii. 6, we read there, "He is thy Father that *bought* thee," but surely a father does not purchase his posterity, and the parallel in the rhythm fully explains the import of the word, "Hath he not *made* thee," which proves that the primary sense of our verb was the intention of the inspired lawgiver, "He is thy Father that begat thee." Our text now assumes this shape, "Jehovah begat me the beginning of His way." We may now allot a few moments to the consideration of the word "Beginning." This does not mean the first being, or creature, or attribute that was formed or made, but the beginning from and by which all creation began or took its rise, that is, the source or fountain head of all things. The text will now present this form, "Jehovah begat me, the source or first cause of His way." And what is the special import of the term "way" in the passage before us? This question seems to be answered most satisfactorily by the clause that follows our text, in which

we find "His works" the parallel to and explanation of, "His way;" and with this agrees Job xxvi. 14, where, in a very similar passage to our context, the patriarch is describing the wonders of creation and sums up a vivid portraiture of the omnipotence of God, as displayed in the origin and conservation of the universe, "Lo, these are a part of His *ways.*"

Lastly, who is it that we are to understand by the pronoun "me" of whom these things are spoken? The reference is to Wisdom. Wisdom personified, or rather personal, as seems implied by the plural form of the noun employed frequently in this book; Wisdoms, *i.e.*, the essence and excellency of wisdom. In the first chapter, Wisdom is introduced as the preacher of the word, and the guide to the way of life; and in the third chapter as well as the eighth, as the divine agent in the formation of the universe. This description of Wisdom is no mere oriental imagery, nor the drapery of a poetic imagination thrown around an unsubstantial existence or an abstract attribute, but rather the *revelation* of a personality, whose preroga-

tives are the same as those ascribed to Messiah by the prophet—"Counsel, understanding and strength." (Isaiah xi. 2).

The Jews of old, before the coming of our Lord, referred our text and kindred passages to the Word of God, and since the incarnation there has never existed any doubt among the orthodox in the Church of Christ, that the Wisdom and the Word of God are synonyms of the second person of the Trinity, and who can doubt that the faith of believers before and after that event was right, when we compare the paragraph of which our text is the introduction with other passages of Holy Writ. Literally rendered it runs thus,

"Jehovah begat me the first cause of his way,
Before His works of old.
From eternity I proceeded,[2]
From the beginning, before the antiquities of the earth,
When there were as yet no abysses was I brought forth;
When there were no fountains swollen with waters.
Before the mountains were settled,
Before the hills was I brought forth;
While as yet He had not made the earth and wastes,
And the premeval dust of the world.
When He founded the Heavens, there was I;
When He fixed His decree upon the face of the abyss;
When He established the clouds above;
When the fountains of the abyss prevailed;
When He set to the sea His decree,

That the waters should not transgress His command;
When He decreed the foundations of the earth;
Then was I at His side, the Architect;
And was delighted through day and day,[3]
Rejoicing before Him all the time;
Rejoicing in his earth-world;
And my delights were with the sons of Adam."

Who, on reading this inspired effusion of Solomon and comparing it with the first chapter of St. John, can fail to see that the King whom Jehovah loved and the Apostle whom Jesus loved had the same revelation imparted to them. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, He was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him." (John i. 1-3.) And St. Paul echoes the same testimony to the Redeemer in Col. i. 15-17, where he describes the Lord under the title of the "First-born of every creature," where the context proves that not the first made of all the creation, but the first cause of all creation is intended, as the Apostle goes on to say, "for," as grounded on this fact, "by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be thrones*, or dominions, or principalities,

or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Compare with this also I. Cor. viii. 6. "There is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things, and we by Him." The same doctrine finds its expression in Rev. iii. 14, where the Lord in His message to the Church of Laodicea announces Himself as "the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." This last clause is evidently a quotation of our text from the book of Proverbs, in which Christ declares Himself to be not the first that was created, but the source of the creation of God. Moreover our Lord, in the days of His sojourn upon earth, distinctly identified Himself with the Wisdom of our text, by assuming the very name as His own. In Matt. xi. 19, He speaks of Himself and His disciples under the terms of Wisdom and her children, and in Luke xi. 49, claims the authorship of the prophetic word under the same name. St. Paul also traces a like connection in I. Cor. i. 30, "Christ Jesus

is made unto us Wisdom from God." See also such passages as Rom. ii. 33, and Col. ii. 3. How full and suggestive is our text of the great doctrine of the pre-existence and Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, a doctrine which we feel to be the question, alas that we should have to say so, of our day. We take up the inspired revelation like a telescope and with it venture to strain our mental sight, to gaze into the remotest period of the bygone eternity, before suns shone and planets rolled, or the intellects of men or angels reasoned, and the august and awe-inspiring vision of the one God and Father fills the back ground with whom is united Wisdom, Wisdom all-perfect and personal, who is represented not as the dream of a poet's fancy, nor as the metaphysical idea of a logician, nor even as an attribute of God, or the impersonal reason of the Deity, but as a self-conscious Person with all the personal characteristics of Deity, whose thoughts and designs are omniscient and whose power is almighty, who is the Agent of the plans and purposes of the Father and *the* Architect of His works, the creative Word,

the Son of God—"Whom Jehovah begat, the beginning, or source, of His way."

Having thus explained the import of our text, we now turn to collateral passages of Scripture to obtain some additional light upon our subject. The ancient writers of the inspired word seem to have had a less degree of information granted them on the extent of space than on that of duration. There are many hints, however, scattered up and down the Scriptures which go far to prove (and these passages, I feel sure, as the true criticism of the Bible is more thoroughly and generally studied will be an increasing number) that the knowledge possessed by those of old time, concerning the laws that govern the machinery of the universe, was not of that limited or puerile character which it is the fashion of our day to impute to them. Such knowledge was not necessary for the instruction of the soul in righteousness or for its growth in grace, and therefore Revelation did not assume the office of a text book on natural philosophy. Yet whatever were the conceptions of Patriarchs and Prophets concerning the bulk or the

distances from us of the lights of heaven, or the extent of the fields of space, we cannot entertain a doubt that in such a branch of secular science, they were inferior to ourselves ; on the other hand, it is evident that their ideas of duration were far in advance of modern thought, and, consequently, their vocabulary to express their conception of the ages and cycles of eternity was richer and more magnificent than the modes of modern expression. It would appear, as the result of an examination of the statements of Scripture on this subject, that the inspired penmen had two almanacks or calendars presented to their mind's eye, the one divine, the other human ; there were the days and years and ages of God, and the days and years and life of man ; hence, as the period of human existence is made up of successions and revolutions of days and years, regulated by rising and setting suns and the return of seasons, so in the chamber of the imagination, elevated by inspiration from above, they heaped vast multiples of duration, whose very unit was immensity, and compared with which the longest computable

period is a vanishing fraction, the one upon the other in ever repeated reduplication and unending succession, and this ever accumulating series, without end and reckoned from no beginning, extended indefinitely to the past and to the future. Such was the great hidden age of the Hebrew thought with its ages of ages and eternities of eternities, forming at once the conception and the definition of the everlastingness of the Self-existent. In this calendar of heaven are found its own days and years and ages, not such meagre measurements as chronicle our life, but as boundless space compared to a world narrow and circumscribed, so are the ages of eternity to the hours of time, and the days of God to the days of man. Such are the age-days of Genesis the 1st, before the sun, the cause of man's day, stood in relation to the earth. Such seems to be the arithmetic taught by Moses in the 90th Psalm, "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." (v. 2). A thousand years in Thy sight are like the flitting day to man or the watches of the night spent in sleep and without observation. St. Peter was taught in the

school—"A thousand years" are with the Lord "as one day." 2 Pet. iii. 8. And the Apocalypse follows the same rule in giving the day of the Lord the expanse of a millenium, which itself is but the morning dawn of everlasting light,—of a day that shall never end. Thus absolute or extra-mundane duration is not viewed as an indefinite and desert blank, but as having its own days and divisions, the worlds of time, as they have been termed, which constitute the universe of eternity, hence the kingdom of God is called "a kingdom of all eternities, [4] "Psalm cxlv. 13, and God himself the King of the eternities, [5] I. Timothy i. 17.

Let us, in the next place, consider what the Scriptures reveal concerning the Son of God in connection with this era that knows no beginning. In Psalm ii. 7, we read, "*This day* have I begotten thee." What day is it of which the Psalmist speaks? Some refer the day to the nativity and some to the resurrection of our Lord, but when we call to mind how entirely the Psalter is based upon the Pentateuch and the revelations made to Moses permeate the utterances

of David, we shall find little difficulty in assigning the "day" of the second Psalm to the "day" of eternity that preceded the creation of the world. St. Paul, in Acts xiii. 33, it is true, seems to quote this passage as a prophecy of the resurrection, but it needs no argument to prove that the Apostle did not regard the rising from the dead as the generation of Christ, but that, as frequent examples occur in his writings, he drew a parallel between the eternal generation of the Son of God followed by the formation of the material world, and his resurrection from the grave that ushered in the creation of the moral world. The resurrection work of Christ is but the spiritual reflection of the primeval "Let there be light." (See Col. i. 15-18.)

Again, in Prov. viii., already quoted, in the 30th verse, where in our version we read "daily"—"I was daily his delight"—it is literally "day—day," and as the context contains a description of the order of creation, or, in other words, is a repetition of the first chapter of Genesis, in a modified form, there can be no question that this

"day on day" successive, refers to the six days of the creation of heaven and earth when the Creative Word and Wisdom, co-eternal with the "Ancient-of-days," was summoning all things into existence.

But a still more striking and conclusive testimony is found in Micah v. 2, "And thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity." The purport of the revelation here unveiled to us is unmistakeable, that in time to come a child should be born in this village who should be the Divinely-appointed King of Israel; but that his existence had been prior to this event, for his goings forth had been from of old, from the days of eternity. The only question that can arise is, what are these "goings forth." Some take the word to signify the puttings forth of his power in the creation of all things both visible and invisible, and others understand it as referring to his *eternal* generation. The latter seems to be

the preferable exposition, because it stands in contrast to his birth on earth, and this interpretation, so far from cancelling the other, almost involves it. He who was begotten of the Father in the profoundest depths of eternity was also His Agent and Architect by whom He made the universe.

Having thus selected a few out of many passages of Scripture to establish the pre-existence of the Lord Jesus Christ as the personal Word and Wisdom of God in all eternity, let us proceed to consider more closely the second part of our text, which speaks of this mysterious Being as the "beginning" or source of the way of God. Creation is divided into dispensational and material, visible and invisible. We assert, then, in the first place, that the Father created the ages or time-worlds or dispensations by the personal Word or Wisdom, that is, by His co-eternal Son. These time-worlds we have before spoken of as the periods which form so prominent a feature in the first chapter of Genesis. Each one of these vast epochs found its birth in the darkness of an evening and its maturity

and close in a morning. Each one was necessary for the existence of the following, and all were successive steps that paved the way for the final act of God—the creation of man. Now, it is a striking fact in the Mosaic narrative that each one of these periods was ushered in by "God said." The utterance or outgoing of the Word was the Agent by which God effected His purpose, and the Mediator of the dispensations which were to culminate in the day of grace and the day of glory; and to this effect we read in Heb. i. 2, "By whom He made the worlds," or ages, and again in Heb. xi. 3, "By faith we understand that the worlds"—the ages, or æons, or dispensation-periods—"were framed or arranged by the *Word* of God."

All the worlds of matter were formed by Him. We have already seen in our context that the creation of the universe is ascribed to the person of Wisdom, and that this Wisdom was the "Architect" of the vast machinery above us, around us, and beneath our feet, for so should the word be translated which our version renders "as one brought *up with* him." Genesis i. tells us that it

was the Word of God that made the light burst forth from the womb of darkness, that lifted up the waters above the expanse, made herbs to spring, and bade the beasts and birds traverse the earth and air, and at last achieved the climax of the glorious work in counsel with the Father, who said "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." The same truth is taught in Psalm xxxiii. 6. "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made," and again in Psalm cii. 25, which is quoted in Hebrews i. 10, and applied to Christ,—"Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands;" and once more, in Psalm civ., which is the first chapter of Genesis set to poetry, we have a graphic description of the creation, where after tracing the creative acts of God step by step and stage by stage, in the 24th verse, the inspired minstrel breaks forth into a hymn of praise, "O Lord how manifold are thy works, *in wisdom*, or, *by Wisdom* hast thou made them all." The parallel to our text is so plain that no further comment is necessary. Neither need we again remind you that this

revelation of the Old Testament which ascribes the building and furnishing of heaven and earth to the Word and Wisdom of God, finds its echo in the New Testament. "All things were made by Him" (the Word), saith St. John, not only were the heavens and the earth the work of His fingers, but also all the inhabitants thereof, thrones and dominions, and principalities and powers, natures angelic and human, all were made by Him and for Him. See John i. 3, and Col. i. 16.

Thus we have, feebly indeed, but I trust successfully, proved from the testimony of Holy Writ the existence in glory of our pre-incarnate Lord in the furthest distances of an ineffable and inconceivable eternity; that the immeasureable eras of the ante-mundane dispensations preparatory to the development of his purposes concerning man were framed by Him; that, further, when it was the will of the Almighty Father that the universe should be built, and suns and stars posted in their centres, and planets and worlds set free to run their wondrous course, that these vast globes of light and matter were the *fingerwork* of the Son of God, thrown off

from the laboratory of His omnipotence, and scattered by thousands in the profusion of His creative power throughout the fields of space, whilst in the plenitude of His wisdom each was nicely balanced to counterpoise the rest and appointed to fulfil its mission.

Ah, my brethren, how grand the thought, to look up into that vaulted sky and regard it as the Temple of the Almighty; to see those countless orbs gemming the ceiling or forming the brilliants on which His feet should tread, and yet more glorious the thought that He who in the flesh died upon the cross for us and our salvation, and whom we may call our own, our Friend, and our Brother, was the Builder and Maker of this stupendous cathedral of the universe, the temple not made with hands, the residence of God!

This doctrine of the pre-existence and Deity of Jesus Christ was declared in no doubtful terms by our Lord Himself. "Before Abraham was, I am," was His confession before His enemies. John viii. 58. "Glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was,"

was His prayer to His heavenly Father. John xvii. 5. And this was the revelation made by Him after His ascension and session at the right hand of God, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. (Rev. i. 8.) This was the creed of the Apostles, and this the fundamental article of faith they taught the first converts to Christianity. He is the brightness, the off-ray of the Father's glory, the express image of His person, or exposition of His essence—by whom He made the worlds. (See Heb. i. 2, 3.) The Word of Life, that which we have seen and handled, was from the beginning. (I. John i. 1.) This, too, was the creed of the early Church, so many of whose members were martyrs for the doctrines they believed. This has ever been the creed of the Universal Church, which, however distracted and differing on minor points, is one and undivided on this fundamental article of faith. This, too, is pre-eminently the confession of the Church of England, the basis of her confidence, and *the anchor* of her hope. In her liturgy, her

creeds and articles, the confession is formal and frequent of the Deity and pre-existent eternity of Him who took on Him our nature that He might be the Saviour of sinners and the Redeemer of the lost.

This doctrine, therefore, we hold as "the faith once for all delivered to the saints," in opposition to the heresy of Arius, who taught that, though Christ was a god, He was not from all eternity, nor of the same essence with the Father; in opposition to the still grosser heresy of Socinus, who regarded our Lord merely as the son of Joseph and Mary; in opposition to that falsely-called rationalism with which all Churches and religious communities are being riddled and honeycombed like a fortress under the fire of a besieging army—that rationalism, that would treacherously draw a distinction between the Divinity and Deity of Christ, and whilst with a Judas' kiss and a show of reverence it admits the former, on the ground that all He said and taught was divine, yet robs him of the latter, his proper Godhead, which is at once the basis and the backbone of the long roll of Scripture testimony and the express declara-

tion of such passages as our text, "Jehovah begat me the beginning of His way."

Let us pause, in conclusion, to make a few reflections.

(1.) What a Saviour is ours! God incarnate, the Wisdom of the eternal ages, whose goings forth are from everlasting. The operative Word by which all things visible and invisible, angels and principalities, sprung from non-entity into life, and suns and stars and wondrous orbs leaped out of darkness into light to people the vast profound. It was He who laid aside His glory, stepped down from His throne, passed through the choir of angels and came to this world of ours, a mere corner of His creation, which, like a wandering and lost sheep, had strayed from the bright fold where the faithful and the obedient ranged and pastured. And when found in fashion as a man, He stooped to death—and such a death—the death of the cross. Oh, miracle of miracles! Put side by side the paragraph, of which our text is the preface, and the narrative of the sufferings and death of *Jesus Christ* on Calvary as detailed in the

pages of the Evangelists, and learn what the love of God must be towards man—poor, fallen man! Love, that prompted Him to give up His Son, His only begotten Son, for us all. Love, that led that incarnate Son of God to suffer that we might be spared—to cry with agony that we might shout in triumph—to be stripped and pierced and stabbed that we might be clothed upon and healed—and to die upon the cross that we might live for ever.

(2.) Such a Saviour became us, at once the Almighty and the All-Merciful. His omnipotence is manifest from His creative acts; His mercy from His condescension. Who should perish if such a mighty and merciful One is engaged and pledged by covenant for his salvation? and the covenant of grace He has made with His believing people, whereof His Spirit that dwells within them is the token and the testimony. What power, what emphasis, when viewed in connection with the pre-existence and Deity of our Lord, is there in the words of St. Paul, "It is *Christ* that died." Rom. viii. 34.

(3.) Lastly, let us inquire with ourselves, has the Spirit of God been shed abroad in our hearts, has the great teacher of the Church led us to contemplate the Son as the only begotten and sent of the Father, has He glorified Christ in us? Are we at this season of Advent preparing a cradle in our hearts for the Lord of Glory to rest in? Do we seek to honour Him as we honour the Father? Are we at all conscious of the magnitude of His mission and the vast results that hinge upon it?

Oh blessed, thrice blessed is the man that trusteth in Him; blessed is he to whom the Spirit of God has revealed this mystery, his trust is in the Lord Jehovah, in a crucified but pre-existent Lord, in Him who, though on earth He became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, was in the bosom of the Father from all eternity; the Creative Word, the Co-eternal Wisdom, the true God and eternal life, the *Alpha* without beginning and the *Omega* without end.

II.

CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT PERIOD.

ST. JOHN I. 18.

"*No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.*"

THE proposition which occupies the centre of this verse is parallel to the subject that engaged our thoughts last Sunday. It tells us that the only begotten Son is in the bosom of the Father; the form of the expression in the original[1] defines the being of the Son in the bosom of the Father, according to absolute truth, without reference to any particular point of time. He is by nature and essence in the bosom of the Father. It would be impossible also without paraphrase to give an exact reflection

of the cast of thought conveyed by the phrase "in the bosom;" the idea is twofold, at once suggestive of the generation of the Son from the Father, as belonging to His bosom; and yet of His personal distinction from Him. The whole passage is a reproduction in another form of the first verse of this chapter, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," and, "the Being," in the bosom of the Father, is an echo of the incommunicable "I am," and identifies the Son with Jehovah.

It is also specially worthy of our notice, that the two oldest and most valuable manuscripts of the New Testament which have been preserved to us, read "God"[2] in the place of "Son," "the only begotten God," and this reading is supported by a large number of the Greek Fathers. Such a passage as our text will at once recall to our minds the line of thought we pursued in our former discourse. We there endeavoured to draw aside the veil that separates the seen from the unseen and to push our way behind the barriers of time

and sail out into the boundless expanse of eternity. We started from the date of man's nativity from the dust of the ground, and in our upward course passed by the previous creative acts of God, that stood out like islands in the endless ocean, till we came beyond all limits; every standard of comparison was left behind, and the "beginning," that vast immeasurable yet unmeasured, was occupied by God alone, the One Uncreated and the One Self-existent. Into that deepest recess of infinite duration the Word of inspiration cast a ray of light, and a vision arose that revealed to us the co-existence with the Father of the co-equal and co-eternal Word and Wisdom, the only begotten "Son" and "God," who, as our text testifies, is in the bosom of the Father, "I am," from everlasting. His "goings forth" are reckoned from that undefined and dateless age, and His generation traced from the days of eternity, the ever Son of the ever Father. We saw, further, that when the arm of Omnipotence put forth its energies it was by the Word that all things visible and invisible started out of non-entity into life and

thought, and the thousand chequered forms of matter beautified each corner of creation —that at His beck and behest principalities and powers arose into their majestic being —that the time-worlds rolled on their gigantic circuits framed for the development and maturing of His purposes and plans— that suns and stars were kindled at His touch, and planets and worlds un-anchored and launched to sail upon the sea of space, and amongst this fair fleet our world was one, destined to bear, as her freight, the precious deposit of man created in the image and likeness of the Great Maker of all.

From this point, the creation of man, the subject of this morning commences—Christ in the Old Testament period. The first chapter of Genesis has already unfolded to us the purpose and will of the Father, and the mysterious "God said," which was the source and spring of all that lives and moves, the Word, with whom also He took counsel in the consummating act of creation, "Let us make man." "Let us make;" this was a challenge addressed not to the Angelic hosts, as the Jews would tell us, nor to his

attributes, for attributes are but the parts that make up the sum total of personality. Nor are we to regard this form of speech as the plural of Majesty, as such a form did not exist in early days, for if it had, why was it not used before in the earlier exercises of creative power ; but this challenge was addressed to the co-existent Word, that was in the bosom of the Father, whose " delights," we have been already told, " were with the sons of Adam." Consistently with the relation thus entered on with man when he first burst into being, we find a close connection sustained by this mysterious Person after the creation, and after the fall of man. He who in the beginning was the Word, henceforth assumed the office of the Interpreter of the Father. According to the testimony of our text, "No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he declared Him."

May it be our united prayer this day that He, who alone hath the power and the right, may make to us a further revelation of the mysteries of God.

I. Our subject to-day is the second Person of the Trinity, as the Revealer of God to man in the period that elapsed between the creation of Adam and the incarnation of the Word. The texts adduced last Sunday, and the line of argument recalled to mind this morning, will have prepared us to anticipate some continued manifestation of Himself. It would seem to be a natural consequence that He by whom the world was made, should afterwards become the President of its destinies, and the patron of the tribes that should inhabit it. The hints that are given us of this fact are but thinly scattered on the earlier pages of sacred history, but those, though few, are suggestive. In a general way, we may remark, that it cannot have failed to have struck the attentive reader how frequently the figure occurs, by which the Lord is represented to us, in the former part of Genesis, as acting and speaking after the manner of men. It was the *voice* of the LORD God that Adam heard in the midst of the garden, after he had partaken of the fruit of the forbidden tree. The promise of re-

demption was couched in terms that were significant of humanity: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head;" and all the converse that transpired between the Divine Being and mankind down to the times of Abraham assumes a character, or is veiled in a covering, that is intelligible to mankind as partaking of the externals that are familiar to our eyes and ears, or form the conditions of our being. These manifestations have not been inaptly called "anticipations of the Incarnation." Nevertheless, the era that elapsed between Adam and Abraham was noted rather for the development of iniquity and the execution of vengeance upon the guilty, than for fresh manifestations of the Almighty, or preparations for the establishment of His kingdom. But when the arrows of judgment had been returned to their quiver, and the flood retired from its stern errand of extirpation, then a system of grace succeeded, and with that new era a more intimate communication was inaugurated between God and His people.

After Abraham had received his call, and was severed from the rest of mankind to be

the depositary of God's grace and the recipient of those blessings that were the germ of the Gospel, the reader of Holy Writ cannot fail to have noticed the introduction of apparently a new agent upon the scene of revelation. We now on every page meet with the Angel of the LORD, or the Angel of Jehovah; for when LORD or GOD is printed in our Authorized Version in small capitals throughout, those words represent that sacred name in the original. We mention this, because this particular angel is always united with this title of God, or some equivalent,—the Angel of Jehovah! The word "angel" is a Greek word naturalized in our own tongue, and means a messenger; but the Hebrew word, of which this is an imperfect translation, lays bare deeper veins of thought. It signifies the operator, the worker, the agent, and is closely allied to the terms Mediator and Revealer. Now, who was this Angel of Jehovah? We assert that he was none other than the Creative Word. He who had administered creation, now administered the affairs of God amongst men. The word "worker" at once points us back to the

genesis of all things, and identifies the Angel with the Architect of the works of God (Prov. viii. 30), and the angelic offices performed by him as the "sent of God" are prophetic of his mission in the flesh. Let us give a passing glance at some of the statements of Scripture that relate to this mysterious Being. His first recorded appearance under this character (I say first recorded, but it does not follow that it was the first; the features of the narrative seem rather to imply the contrary) was to Hagar in the wilderness, when she fled from her mistress Sarai. The fugitive handmaid, it would almost appear as a necessary inference, had heard in Abraham's house of such revelations of the Deity; for she recognizes him at once as God, and said, "Thou, God, seest me," and the name which she gave to the well, "Lahai-Roi," where the vision was granted her, seems to evince the existence in her mind of the impression that prevailed universally amongst the ancients that no man could see God and live. In the twenty-second chapter the Angel of Jehovah makes revelation of Himself from heaven to Abraham

on Mount Moriah,—a place whose name, as portending the appearance of Jehovah, was intimately bound up with the then present and future aspect of this angel towards mankind. He holds back the uplifted hand of the obedient Patriarch when on the verge of burying the sacrificial knife in the bosom of Isaac. He gives Abraham promises also which it is only in the power and prerogative of God to utter and perform. His name in this narrative is interchanged with Jehovah, so as to convey the impression and inculcate the doctrine that the angel of Jehovah and Jehovah are one in essence, though distinct in person. Passing over other appearances of this angel, as necessarily we are restricted to selections only, we advert to the concluding scene of Jacob's life. The aged Patriarch has arrived at the last stage of his pilgrimage, in which so many dangers and deliverances had been interwoven; He is in the act of breathing a blessing on the sons of his well-beloved Joseph; and as he recalls to his memory the many mercies he had received, an earnest desire springs up within his heart

that they might be perpetuated in his posterity. And, recognizing the source from whence all the good he had experienced had flowed, he gathered up the sum total of all that he could desire for their welfare in the benediction, "The Angel that redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads" (Gen. xlviii. 16). The Angel, the *Redeemer*—this is the very title of Messiah that is so frequent in the prophecies of Isaiah, and so familiar in the mouth of every member of the church of Christ. And probably this prayer of the patriarch was embodied in the prayer of the Angel of Jehovah incarnate, which He taught His disciples, "deliver us from evil." The manifestation recorded in the third chapter of Exodus has an important bearing on this branch of our subject. A long period has passed since Jacob's death, which had been dark and crowded with disaster to his posterity. At length the time of visitation had come, and the Lord heard the groanings of His people. It was then that the Angel of Jehovah renewed his communications with Israel, and revealed himself to Moses on Mount Horeb, in a

flame of fire in a bush—a fire that was the effulgence of his native glory, the Shechinah or dwelling-place of Deity. Again, in this place also the Angel and the Lord seem to be synonymous terms, for He declares Himself to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,—"This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." Once more, in the thirteenth chapter of Judges, Manoah, having received a visit from the same exalted Being, is related to have asked His name; and the angel in reply demanded, "Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret," or as in the margin, "Wonderful." This is the same name, be it remembered, that stands first in the catalogue of glorious titles ascribed to Messiah in the ninth chapter of Isaiah—"His name shall be called Wonderful."

Nor is this angelic manifestation peculiar to the Pentateuch and earlier books of the Bible: it finds a place occasionally in the historical or mediæval times of the Hebrew theocracy, and bursts out with even more than primitive clearness in the closing pages of the Old Testament Canon. Thus, in

Zechariah, the Angel of Jehovah appears as acting the part of Advocate and Intercessor in behalf of the captives who had but lately been rescued and restored from Babylon. He is the patron alike of their religious and political constitution. Jerusalem and her temple are the apple of his eye, and it would seem that the same great Being, so conspicuous in the pages of this prophet, is referred to under another form, in xiii. 7, as the Shepherd of Israel, the "Man" or "Mighty One," who is Jehovah's fellow,—a term which approaches as nearly as possible to the symbol or watchword of the Nicene Creed, "consubstantial,"—"of the same substance with the Father." And lastly, before the roll of prophecy is closed, Malachi (iii. 1) declares that "the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger or Angel of the Covenant, whom ye delight in." What covenant is this which the Angel of Jehovah is to mediate? Surely, it can be none other than the Covenant of Redemption, whose first announcement was made in the first Gospel ever preached,—"The seed of the

woman shall bruise the serpent's head" (Gen. iii. 15). This must be the covenant referred to, as all other and subsequent covenants —such as the promise made to Abraham, or "the sure mercies of David"—were but further developments, the natural and necessary expansions of this the fountain head of all future blessings.

And here we would remind you, though it seems somewhat like retracing our steps, of the light shed upon this subject by the Book of Daniel. We read, in the visions of this gifted seer, of one called Michael, to whom all the other angels yield obedience, and without whose aid they are powerless. He is the great Prince that stands for the children of Daniel's people, the Guardian Angel of Israel,—an anticipation, surely, of the subsequently well-known title, "the King of the Jews." Moreover, it is stated that when he shall stand up there shall be a time of tribulation,—"And many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." In other words, his standing up shall be the summoning of the judgment, and the signal of the Resurrection. We forbear making

further comment now on these passages, reserving our comparison of their unfoldings with the teachings of the New Testament to another place. But, grouping all these several testimonies together, the conclusion is inevitable that "the Word who was in the beginning with God" assumed the form and office of the Angel and Agent of Jehovah after the creation of man and the establishment of the covenant of promise, of which he was the Mediator: "the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he declared Him."

II. In the second place, we proceed to observe, that, in addition to the revelations made concerning this Angel or Agent, of Jehovah, and His omnipresence with the people of the covenant throughout the period covered by the Old Testament history, we meet also with another expression, — the "presence," or "face," in connection with the manifestations of Deity. The reader of Scripture would be inclined, in all probability, at first sight, to refer such a mode of speech to the province of figure and metaphor, and be satisfied with the explana-

tion that "presence" and "superintending providence" are convertible terms; but, on making a closer examination of the passages where this word occurs, we shall discover that this form of speech is intended to represent to us the same Being that we have heretofore recognized as the Angel of Jehovah. All words are really pictures presented by one mind with a view to their being apprehended by another mind, and the original portrayed by these two words on the page of inspiration is one and the same. How graphic and simple an illustration is thus afforded of deep and mysterious doctrines will readily appear. Man is known by his face; he is distinguished from his fellows especially by his countenance and features. The face establishes the fact of each individual's identity. We know a man to be such an one by this manifest and unmistakable proof of his own personality.

Moreover, the face is the index of the mind of its possessor,—the exponent of the disposition and feelings of the hidden man,—the mirror that reflects the inner workings of his heart. In like manner, the second

Person in the Trinity is the Expositor of the Father: "He declared or explained Him." How beautifully and harmoniously these figures of speech combine, and the lines and tints of these mental pictures blend and melt into each other, to produce the designed effect! The bosom or heart of God is a depth into which no created being can dive, the very thought of an attempt at a scrutiny of that ocean of mystery and magnificence makes us shrink and recoil with a holy fear, but the Son is the interpreter of the heart of the Father. The "Word" is the utterance, and the "presence" the manifestation of the Father. As the voice and the face to man, so are the relative offices, in a figure, of the Son to the Father, in making Him known to His creatures. He is the exact impression of His essence, and the Expositor of His will.

Let us now consult the Scriptures on this subject. (1) In Exodus xxxiii. we learn that the Lord was exceeding wroth with Israel for their manufacture and worship of the idol-calf, and threatened, in punishment of their apostasy, that He would not go up in

their midst to bring them into the land of Canaan. Yet He would not break His Word: the people should inherit, as He had promised them, the possessions of the heathen; but the office of Captain and King, which He had hitherto sustained, He would delegate to an angel: mark, not to the Angel of Jehovah, but to a subordinate—a created angel. The people, hearing these evil tidings, repented and wept. And Moses drew near to the tabernacle, and interceded for the penitents. And the Lord heard and answered the prayer of his servant, and turned away from His wrathful indignation. "My presence," said He, "shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest" (v. 14.) If we compare this with xxiii. 20, 21, the identity of the "presence" and the Angel of Jehovah will be evident. "Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him." And again, in the twenty-third verse,—"Mine angel shall go before thee."

(2). It is a somewhat remarkable feature in the Holy Scriptures that those texts which appear to prove most conclusively the unity of God, contain not unfrequently a testimony to the plurality of Persons in the Godhead. The first Commandment is a striking illustration of this comprehensiveness of expression. The literal translation of this chief and foremost enunciation of the Divine will would read—"Thou shalt not have other gods in addition to *my presence*," or "*face;*" that is, besides the manifestation which I make of myself. Now, as God made no other revelation of His Being and attributes save through the mediation of the Angel of Jehovah, it follows that the "*face*" of God here spoken of as associated with the Father in equal majesty and honour, is only another mode of defining the doctrine of the co-existence and co-equality of the only Begotten.

(3) Once more, the connection between the "Presence" of the Lord and the Angel of the Lord is evident from Gen. xlix. 15, already quoted, where Jacob says, "God before whom," or literally before whose *Pre-*

sence or Face my fathers walked—God that was my shepherd—the Angel that redeemed me—bless the lads;" the verb "bless" being in the singular number, and thus showing that God and the Presence and the Angel are one. This lesson is conveyed also in Isaiah lxiii. 9; where this passage and those already cited, from the twenty-third and thirty-third chapters of Exodus, seem blended together, and Israel's Redeemer is entitled "the Angel of his (Jehovah's) presence." This text throws light both upon the past and future bearings of the subject, and harmonises the figure with other portions of Holy Writ. The Angel of the presence of Jehovah, according to the testimony of the prophet, sustained the office of Saviour; and it may not be undeserving our notice that the root of the words "Saviour" and "saved" found in the context yield the name of Jesus, —the name of Him "who *saves* His people from their sins."

We conclude, therefore, from the comparison of Scripture with Scripture, that the "Presence" or "Face" implies manifestation; and it is almost needless to add that the

Face must necessarily be the exhibition of a nature or essence con-substantial with itself and that the Angel of the presence is identical with the Angel in whom was the name of God; and as the august office of revealing the Unseen Father was associated with the Angel of Jehovah, so under this figure are we to understand the investiture of the same prerogative. And, further, we believe that both these foreshadowings found their united consummation in Him who, looking back through all the ages of the past, could utter from the innermost depths of his own self-consciousness and experience—"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he declared Him."

III. We also meet, on the pages of the Old Testament Scriptures, with the appearance of a Man,—a Man who is equipped with all the powers of Omnipotence, and exercises the attributes of Deity. The first instance of these quasi-human manifestations is recorded in the thirty-second chapter of Genesis, where the narrative of Jacob's return to the land of his nativity is detailed,

and a life-like picture is drawn of the terrors of soul he underwent through fear of his brother Esau, whom he had so grossly wronged some twenty years before. The historical statements of this crisis in Jacob's life lead us to believe that the fears of the Patriarch were not groundless. Esau, beyond a doubt, entertained in his heart hostile purposes against his former supplanter; he was coming forth from the fastnesses of Seir with four hundred hardy mountaineers in his train—an army that would swallow up in an instant the feeble company of herdsmen and shepherds that tended Jacob's flocks. But there existed a more serious cause for apprehension even than the dreaded animosity of the prince of Edom: God appeared to have withdrawn from Jacob, or at least to have given no promise of interposition for his deliverance. It was the night of Jacob's agony, and the banks of Jabbok his Gethsemane. All night there wrestled with him a Man—mark, the opposition arose from the mysterious Visitant. Jacob's faith failed not in the struggle: all through the darkness of that night, his importunity found utter-

ance in "strong crying and tears." At length the day dawns on that unparalleled combat, and the "Man" puts forth his hand, and lo! the nerve of Jacob's thigh is paralyzed under the touch. Human strength and all the elastic energy of the Patriarch are now of no avail; yet he will not yield, but clings to his antagonist, and in simple faith casts his arms about his neck, now that his lower limbs are powerless and unstrung—"I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." The victory was won, conceded more than gained; and in memory of his earnest strife in prayer and successful importunity, the nameless "Man" changed Jacob's name to Israel,—a *prince with God;* for, said he, "Thou hast prevailed with *God*" in obtaining thy petition, and with man—with Esau—in turning him aside from his hostility." You will notice that the wrestling was between the "*Man*" and Jacob; but Jacob is said to have prevailed with *God.* Yet further, Jacob called the name of the place where this scene was enacted, Peniel, that is, the "*face*" or "*presence*" *of God;* for, said he, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

This name, Peniel, and its interpretation, at once connect and identify the "Man" with the "Presence" or "Face" of God, and the "Angel" that delivered the Patriarch from all evil.

A sketch of great interest is given us in the closing verses of the fifth chapter of the Book of Joshua. The leader of the armies of Israel had but recently crossed the Jordan, and was in the act of preparing to strike the first blow that should be followed up by the extermination of the Canaanites; and when near Jericho, the town that was doomed to fall first under the stroke of God and the trumpet-blast of faith, "he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold there stood a *Man* over against him, with a sword drawn in his hand." And when Joshua made inquiry of him whether he espoused the side of Israel or that of the foe, he received the reply, "As the Captain of the Host of Jehovah am I now come." Joshua recognised immediately the Divine character of the Visitor, and fell at His feet and worshipped Him, and proffered obedience to His commands. The expressions found in this passage are noteworthy.

The "Man" declares himself to be the *captain* of the host, or *prince;* the same word which is found in the ninth of Isaiah and sixth verse, and translated "*Prince* of Peace." The *Host* of Jehovah, in the singular, refers to the armies of heaven,—the powers above, which were about to fight in behalf of Israel. Thus this passage appears as the basis of the revelations concerning Michael, and the title of "Prince of the Host" is equivalent to "the Archangel" of after history. We may further observe that the command to Joshua to put off his shoes from his feet in the presence of the Prince, connects him with the Angel of Jehovah that appeared to Moses in the Glory-fire; and moreover, the inspired author of this book, in the second verse of the following chapter, identifies him with Jehovah.

A very important passage in connection with this branch of our subject, and one that elucidates the conception of the Godhead and manhood of Messiah as entertained by the ancients, occurs in 2 Sam. vii. 19, and more particularly in the parallel text in 1 Chron. xvii. 17. David at this period of his his-

tory, when the Lord had given him rest, is represented in the narrative as seated in his secret chamber, wrapt in holy meditation before the Lord. He recounts all the way that the Lord had led him, the many deliverances, the signal victories and successes He had vouchsafed him, and the countless blessings by which he was surrounded; and, above all, the special promises he had just received at the mouth of Nathan the prophet concerning the future greatness of his kingdom and family, make his heart swell with gratitude, and words of memorable importance burst from his lips, rendered in the authorized version in the former passage, "Thou hast spoken also of Thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?" and in the latter, "Thou hast spoken also of Thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O LORD God." The difficulty of this prophecy consists in its startling clearness: it is "dark with excessive bright." The simple rendering, as has been acknowledged by many, is of the text in Samuel, "And this is the ordinance

of the Man, or the Adam, the Lord Jehovah," —where the reference to the primæval promise given to Eve is beyond a question,—and of that in the Chronicles, "Thou hast made me see according to the ordinance (or succession or pedigree) of the Man, or the Adam, on high, Jehovah God." This translation and reference of the words to Messiah are placed beyond a doubt by the fact that St. Paul, who fully understood the prediction, and wrote under the influence of inspiration, quotes the latter passage, in 1 Cor. xv. 47,— "The second Man, or Adam, is the Lord from heaven."

Lastly, before leaving these types of the future assumption of humanity by the Word and Agent of the Father, we must not omit the link that connects these figures of the Old Testament with the final revelation of the New Testament. In Daniel vii. 13, 14, we read that the Seer "saw in the night-visions, and, behold, one like the *Son of Man* came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before Him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom,

that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." It has been universally admitted that this text furnishes the original from which our Lord adopted His well-known and self-selected name "the Son of Man," as he quoted this prophecy and applied it to Himself when standing before the judgment-seat of the High Priest. A confession which was the immediate signal for his condemnation on the part of that mistaken judge.

It may not be without profit to call attention to the fact that each text, or class of texts in the above examples, has its own special word for "Man." The appearances to Jacob and Joshua are distinguished by the word which represents Man in *honour and power*—a term suited to the surroundings of those august revelations of Deity. In the Davidic texts, the word is *Adam*, which with a fitting force unfolds the humanity of the Coming King, and identifies Him with the "Seed of the

woman:" whereas the vision of Daniel is couched in the term which describes "Man" in his *humiliation*, and suggests the picture of One found in the form of a servant, and in the garb of the suffering.

We may also be reminded that the "Word" of God is invested with a personal character throughout the Old Testament. It was by the Word of the LORD that the LORD revealed Himself unto Samuel (1 Sam. iii. 21). The Word of the LORD spoke to the prophets, and their unvaried announcement to the people was, "thus saith the LORD;" but when Jesus taught, He assumed identity with the Word of Jehovah,—"Verily, verily, *I* say unto you."

In taking a retrospective survey of these "foreshadowings of the Incarnation," and after examining their characteristics and circumstances separately and collectively, can there be any doubt left on our minds as to the Person who presented these appearances to the people of the Old Covenant? Surely none other than the Word and Wisdom of the Eternal Ages, and the Son of God and Messiah of the New Testament, is before us.

Does He manifest Himself as the Agent or Angel of Jehovah to the Patriarchs, and as the Prince of the Angelic host to Joshua and Daniel? The New Testament distinguishes Him as the Revealer of God, and the Sent of God; and the title of Archangel can have no other reference, for Scripture makes no mention of Archangels,—the office is one and singular, and appertains only to Him who is the Captain of the host of Jehovah. Daniel describes, as we have already seen, this pre-eminent "Prince" under the name of Michael, and tells us that when He shall arise the resurrection shall commence. The New Testament replies that the resurrection shall be a response to the voice of the Archangel:—"For the Lord himself shall descend with the word of command, with the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thess. iv. 16). This is a threefold description of the same Divine agency. And our Lord has unlocked the mystery of the Archangelic voice; for, speaking of the same period, He hath told us "That the hour is coming, in the which all

that are in the graves shall hear *his voice*, and shall come forth."—John v. 28, 29.

Further, the conquest of Satan is emphatically the achievement of the Son of God, who was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil (1 John iii. 8); but this victory, and the expulsion of the arch-rebel and his subalterns from heaven, are ascribed in Rev. xii. 7, 8, to Michael and his angels.[3]

Again, is the Angel of Jehovah the appointed guardian and guide of Israel, administering the government of God over them, delivering them from Egypt, leading them in the Wilderness, opening the gates of Canaan, and establishing them in the promised land, rebuking their rebellions, or raising up deliverers, and restoring them from bondage?—the New Testament sums up all these offices in one word, and emblazons it on the cradle and on the Cross, "The King of the Jews." Or does the Divine Mediator come before us under the figure of the "Presence," or the "Angel of the Presence?"—the Gospel supplies the solution of the enigma: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 9).—

"The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He declared Him." Lastly, is He portrayed under the appearance of a "Man?"—the New Testament once more records the fact that "the Son of Man" was the title by which our Lord condescended to designate Himself, when He took on Him our nature and was invested in the office of the second Adam. Thus the figures of the Old Testament are the facts of the New Testament—the prophecies of the one the history of the other; and the shadows reflected on the pages of the former, the substance and realities that stand out in bold relief on the latter. And the only solution that will satisfy the great mystery which is the common subject of both, is found in the "only Begotten" who came forth from the bosom of the Father to declare Him to His creatures.

IV. This is no new doctrine. The more enlightened Jews, before the birth of Jesus Christ, held that the Word of God would become the Messiah. And the Greek translators of the Old Testament, between two and three hundred years before the Incarnation,

assumed that the Great Angel would be the "child that should be born and the Son that should be given" (see Is. ix. 8, in LXX.); and the faith that the Angel of Jehovah was the Word of God, and our pre-incarnate Lord, was a settled dogma of the Christian Creed from the earliest days of the Church. Justin Martyr, in his Controversy with a Jew,—a work which was written little more than a hundred years after the Ascension,—identifies Our Lord with the Angel that appeared to Moses on Mount Horeb; and Irenæus, who flourished but a little later, wrote a book against heresies, in which he inculcates the same doctrine. If, indeed, there is a point on which the Fathers are almost universally agreed, it was this. Thirteen of the most noted of their number might be cited as authorities for this interpretation—there was but one decidedly a dissentient, and that was Augustine, who held that God spoke in the Angel, as he did afterwards in the Prophets. It is a strange circumstance, which we cannot forbear naming, that the Church of Rome, which boasts of following the universal consent of the Fathers, in this

case adopts the opinion of an almost isolated exception. The reason is obvious: she wanted a foundation for her mediæval doctrine of angel-worship; and, finding that the Angel of Jehovah claimed and received homage and adoration, she stripped the Master of His honour, that she might confer His glory on His servants. The Socinians are disciples of the same view, as they could not fail to see the strong proof that was furnished from these Divine manifestations for the doctrine of the Trinity. And the Rationalists, for the same reason, resist the plain teaching of the Scriptures and the Creed of the Church from the beginning. The only argument that can be produced of any seeming weight, is that a messenger cannot be the same as the sender: true, not the same person, but he may be of the same nature; and it does not require much logic to prove, nor much knowledge of Scripture to discover, that the Father can send His Son to be the bearer of His message and the vehicle of His manifestation.

This, then, is our creed and our confession, —that He who was from all eternity co-equal

with the Father, by whom the worlds of time and space were created, watched over the subjects of the old dispensation, appeared to the patriarchs and prophets to reveal the will and word of God to them, anticipating by these acts His Incarnation and dwelling upon earth. What I desire to impress upon you is, that Jesus Christ did not commence his Being when he was born at Bethlehem: that was His assumption of our nature; but His existence as One with the Father, dated from the "beginning" of eternity.

Let us again pause awhile in the presence of this mystery of Godliness, and reflect upon the grace and all-sufficiency of our adorable Lord. Mark His condescension. Though the only Begotten, the "I am" in the bosom of the Father, yet He humbled himself to behold the things on earth.

Consider the mingled acts of his providence and grace: He called the Patriarchs from the lands of ignorance and idolatry, and led them to the faith and obedience of the Living God; unveiled to them the mysteries of the future, and gilded the coming age with the glories which shine around

ourselves, and which shall grow brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Mark His unchanging love: how He bore with the murmurings of the Church in the wilderness; they tempted Christ in the desert, yet he marched before them vested in the robe of the fiery-cloudy pillar. He brake not his covenant, nor did one good thing fail that He had promised them; and when in after years they had rejected his theocratic rule and turned to idols, which proved the decay of their church and constitution, and the occasion of their banishment to Babylon, yet He interceded for their restoration and recovery.

We must not forestall the subject of next Sunday: yet, brethren, let us be thankful that He hath revealed Himself to us even more clearly than He did to the fathers of olden time; that we know him as our Elder Brother and Head of His body the Church, the great Friend of the fallen, and Saviour of every prayerful penitent. May the Holy Ghost enlighten our eyes, that we may read and understand the mystery of the Incarnate Word, as the way, the truth, and the life. May Jesus be the great Guardian Angel of

our pilgrimage through this wilderness-world. May He reveal to us the heart and attributes, the love and the will of the Father, here in the kingdom of grace, and finally unveil to us the vision of His presence in the kingdom of glory and unfading light!

III.

CHRIST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

St. John xvi. 28.

"*I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world.*"

In order to supply the link of connection between the subject of to-day—the Christ of the New Testament — and the preceding lectures of this course, it will be necessary to recapitulate briefly the chief points which we have already established. On the first Sunday in Advent, valid proofs were furnished from Scripture that the Word and Wisdom of God—not a mere attribute, but a Person revealed and defined with all the characteristics and qualities that constitute personality — was co-existent as one with *the* Father—the "I am," in His bosom

from the remotest depths of the bygone eternity; that when the various acts of creation commenced, this co-existent Word was the Agent of the Father and the Architect of His works—"by Him were all things created that are in heaven and earth." On the second Sunday of this holy season, it was seen that after man had been summoned into being by the joint counsel and co-operation of the Father with the Word—"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,"—that the same Divine Being took on Him the office of the "one Mediator between God and men;" that during the Old Testament period He was the Revealer of the Father's will and the mouthpiece of His behests, and was recognised by patriarchs and prophets and holy men of old as the Angel of Jehovah, and the "Presence" or "Face" of God; or he appeared in the form of the Mysterious "Man" who was invested with the name and manifested the attributes of the Almighty.

To-day our subject is the Christ of the New Testament. Under this head it will be our purpose to prove from Scripture that this

same Word of God—the "only Begotten" from the days of eternity—this Angel of Jehovah, this "Presence" of God, took upon Him our nature, and became incarnate as the Lord Jesus Christ, perfect God and perfect Man. Our text forms one of a main system of arteries that permeate and unite the revelations of the Old and New Covenants. It was a solemn asseveration in support of the doctrine of His own proper divinity, uttered by the Saviour Himself at the most solemn period of His life on earth, and under circumstances that must command our entire confidence. It was when He was on the very eve of setting His seal to the visions and prophecies that had gone before concerning Him, when about to give effect to the purposes of eternity by enduring sufferings and death, that involved, both in their inner and outer aggravations, all that was torturesome and tremendous,—it was then that, in calm communication with the disciples whom He loved, and who were longing for some further declaration from His lips that should be stripped of all parable and made plain to their limited conceptions, He

declared, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world."

May the Holy Spirit unfold to us another page of this mystery of God!

I. Our first proposition to-day will be to prove that Jesus Christ, who was born at Bethlehem, the son of the Virgin Mary, was Divine,—in other words, that he was Jehovah clothed in the flesh of man. We make selection of this highest, this incommunicable title of Deity in order that, by so doing, we may cover and include all other designations of the Divine Being: the other names which are attributed to God in the Scriptures are more general in their character; but this embodies alike the ideas of His Essence and His covenant relations towards Mankind.

As a preliminary step to the proof of the proposition before us, it will be necessary to make a brief examination of this mysterious and majestic appellation of the Deity. In a few words, then, the Jews have ever held that this name contains the three times or tenses of the verb to "be," and that it consequently denotes past, present, and future

existence. This interpretation seems to derive support from the declaration of the Lord Himself; for when He unfolded the secrets of the future to the Seer of Patmos, He headed the roll of revelation with the superscription of His name,—"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, *which is, and which was, and which is to come*, the Almighty" (Rev. i. 8). And, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the writer seems to furnish the same explanation, and certainly makes the same ascription of the title to our Lord, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever" (xiii. 8).

Modern criticism has endeavoured to prove that the word is simply a future tense, and that the only meaning it can have is, "He shall be." It may be, doubtless, granted that the form of the word is clearly that which characterises a future; but this admission will not, of necessity, set aside the ancient explication of the mystery contained in this name. The past and the present occupy the background of the picture, whilst *the* future is brought out into prominence,

and stamped with a special emphasis. In other words, Jehovah, fairly interpreted on the ground of Scripture testimony, the requirements of various passages, and the tradition of its interpretation, including also the investigations of the more recent school, may well imply that He, who is self-existent now, and has been self-existent from all eternity, is emphatically the future or coming One,—"He that should come," the "Father of the everlasting age" (see Isaiah ix. 8).

We have, on several occasions, already brought before your notice passages from Scripture which show that the titles "the Angel of Jehovah" and "Jehovah" were used interchangeably: the essence, the powers, and the attributes assigned to the one were exhibited as the same as those which pertained to the other; the distinction appeared to be in the Person. So now we assert that the Messiah who was born nearly two thousand years ago, in Judæa is Jehovah, the Angel of Jehovah, the Word and Wisdom of the Father, who was begotten before all worlds, whose goings

forth were from all eternity. In order to substantiate this statement, we shall cite only a few texts out of a large number that present themselves; our object being to confine our choice to that class which have a special bearing upon the nativity of Christ.

(1.) In Gen. iii. 13, we listen to the first announcement of the Gospel—the good tidings were couched in the declaration that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." Eve, from the moment that she heard these words, evidently entertained the expectation that she should bear a son who should crush the enemy who had deceived her, and roll away the reproach of the fall. Consequently, in natural impatience for the fulfilment of the promise, when she bore Cain, her first-born, she thought that the hour of redemption had dawned, and that this, the first babe that ever breathed, was none other than the child of promise; and this impression on her mind found utterance in words, of which Luther long ago saw the only true and natural translation, "I have begotten a man, the Jehovah," or "the Coming One."[1] Eve's application of the

prophecy was sadly misplaced; but the expression of the faith of the first mother of mankind that the future Redeemer, though her seed, should be Divine, is worthy of our deepest consideration, as it involves the necessary conclusion that such a knowledge must have been imparted to her by revelation from God.

If we compare with this the history of the call of Moses and his mission into Egypt as recorded in the third chapter of Exodus, we shall recognize some striking features of corroborative testimony. The Angel of Jehovah, we read, appeared in a flame of glory-fire in the midst of a bush on the slopes of Horeb, and bade Moses go and deliver Israel from the bondage under which they were groaning; and when he inquired, "Who shall I say sent me unto them? and what is His name?" the reply came from the excellent glory, "I am that I am," I am who am, or who shall be,—a formula which is but an expansion of the name Jehovah. And again, in its more concise form, in the next clause, "I am," or "I," —the Self-existent, and the Coming One—

"have sent thee." What a revival of ancient hopes was awakened in this word! What a reminiscence of the primæval promise! A deliverance had been foretold from the earliest age, and a tradition of the covenanted blessing had been handed down from father to son. During the long bondage in Egypt it had been well nigh forgotten; but now, as the day of Israel's deliverance was dawning—a type of the redemption of the world—the ancient promise bursts forth with clearer light, and the coming seed is identified with the coming God. In after times the unfoldings of the Divine counsel assume an increasing definiteness, and the line of David's family is marked out as the predestined channel in which the life-blood of the world should flow. Again, the incommunicable name is predicated of the King that should arise in Israel, as we saw last Sunday in the grateful confessions of David (2 Sam. vii. 19; 1 Chron. xvii. 17), where "the man from heaven,"—"the divine coming One,"—is called Jehovah.*

The same witness is borne by Micah, in

* See pp. 53–55.

words which have already arrested our attention, which describe the Ruler of Israel, whose birth should take place in the town of Bethlehem where David was, One whose "goings forth have been from the days of eternity,"—v. 2.* And, still more definitely, Jeremiah entitles the King of prosperity and peace "Jehovah our righteousness." And when the Lord was born, the angel announced the will of heaven that his name should be called Jesus; for, although others had borne that name in type and figure —as Joshua, the captain who led the tribes into the land of Canaan, and Jeshua the High Priest, who restored the temple worship after the captivity at Babylon,—yet the babe of Bethlehem alone could claim that name in all its fulness and reality: "His name shall be called Jesus,—Jehovah the Saviour,—for He shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21).

We need scarcely, after what has been said, remind you that this name finds an echo in the New Testament in the frequent synonym of Messiah—"He that should come"—found

* See p. 18.

alike in the message of the Baptist, the confession of Martha, and in the acclamations of the crowd. Our Lord also maintained His right to this name in the days of His flesh, which brought down upon Him the persecution of the Pharisees, who comprehended the meaning of His words, though they would not believe His assertion, "Before Abraham was I am" (John viii. 58). And, after His ascension, the like announcement was made from heaven, in words already quoted this morning,—"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come." We have made but a brief summary of the evidence presented to our view by the inspired writers; but the only conclusion we can arrive at, from the plain language of the statements laid before us, is that Jehovah became incarnate in the Messiah.

(2). Similarly the Divine *Sonship* of Him who took on Him our nature is insisted on in the Scriptures, to guard us against the error held by some of old, and renewed in certain quarters in our day, which would confuse alike the persons of the Trinity and

their respective offices; for it was not the Father, nor the Holy Ghost, but the Word or Wisdom of God, the second Person of the co-eternal Three, that condescended to invest Himself in humanity. The first text that we commented on, enforces the true doctrine, "Jehovah begat me, the beginning of his way" (Prov. viii. 22). In like manner Ps. ii. 7 testifies to this begetment in "the day" of eternity. We find also a string of prophecies which speak of the Messiah under the figure of the "Branch." Isaiah (iv. 2) introduces this line of predictions, "In that day shall the Branch of Jehovah be beauty and glory." A branch is the offshoot and offspring of the parent tree, and we must all admit is of the same nature as the tree itself. The Branch of Jehovah can mean, therefore, nothing else than the Son of God. After this, we read of "My servant the Branch" (Zech. iii. 8); and "the Man whose name is the Branch who shall build the temple of the Lord, and bear the Glory, and sit upon His throne" as priest and king" (see Zech. vi. 12, 13). This title of the Saviour, so expressive of His Divine essence,

is recognized in the New Testament; for the father of the Baptist, in his hymn of praise, sings of the "dayspring from on high"—or rather, as translated in the margin, the Branch—"from on high hath visited us" (Luke i. 78). We conclude, therefore, that Scripture is not lacking in testimony to the doctrine of the Divine *Sonship* of our Lord.

(3). Once more, to recapitulate in some degree the statements of last Sunday, and bring them to their final consummation, we saw that the Angel or Agent of Jehovah was identified with the Eternal Word. So now, we hail the same Mysterious Being incarnate. You will remember, that all the offices of Christ were performed by this Angel in the prior dispensation, and we regard such acts as foreshadowings and evidences of what He would do in the fulness of time. He was the Guide and Guardian of the people—the Archangelic Prince that appeared as their king (Dan. xii. 1). He was the Revealer of the will of God to the patriarchs, and of His future purposes to the prophets. Jacob confessed Him as his

Redeemer (Gen. xlviii. 16); Isaiah as the Saviour (lxiii. 9); Zechariah as the Advocate (i. 12); and Ezekiel as a Priest in his linen ephod (ix. 2). And lest any doubt should cling to our minds as to the person of this Prophet, Priest, and King, and in order to remove the doctrine of his appearance in the flesh out of the domain of doubt into the regions of certainty, Malachi (iii. 1) tells us that "the Lord—the Angel of the Covenant—should suddenly come to His temple." And our Lord, beyond question, referred to this prophecy, and, in so doing, set His seal to the whole line of testimony of which this was the Amen in the old Canon, when, at the age of twelve, He said to Joseph and Mary, as they sought Him in the Temple at Jerusalem, "Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house."[2] (Luke ii. 49).

In comparing these various testimonies of God's Holy Word, and tracing these links of connection which bind together the Scriptures into one compact and solid whole, and like veins and arteries convey the power and presence of the indwelling life

throughout the whole frame of the great book, we cannot refuse the conclusion that Christ our Redeemer is the Foundation Stone upon which the entire structure of the Word is built, and that that Foundation is divine—that all that went before the Incarnation was intended to prepare Man for his first advent, to furnish an index to his proper Being, his dignity, his Deity; that all to whom the revelation of God had come, might recognise in Him Jehovah, the Coming One, and accept Him as such on the witness of His works and the declaration of His Word, "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world."

II. Our subject is the Christ of the New Testament. We have proved, step by step, that He was divine, the Angel of Jehovah, the Son of God, the Word and Wisdom of the Father from all eternity. We now state, with equal certainty, that He was predicted to appear as Man, in the form and reality of our nature, as He had been previously in the essence and form of God. This doctrine is enunciated in unmistakable terms in the primary promise, "The seed of the woman

shall bruise the serpent's head." In this prophetic formula there is a special emphasis on "*the woman*," which is enforced and expanded by Isaiah, "*the Virgin* shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (vii. 14), and realized in the fact recorded in the Gospels that Jesus Christ, though emphatically "the Son of Man," was the Son of no one man—no human father—but the Virgin-born through the energy and overshadowing of the Holy Ghost. Messiah also was announced of old as the seed of Abraham, in whom all nations should be blessed, and as the Son of David who should sit upon His throne and execute judgment and justice in the earth. We have already considered some of the texts of Scripture which represent the Redeemer as the Branch of Jehovah, and from that figure inferred His divine generation. We also meet with a parallel line of testimony in which He is described as the Branch of David and the rod of Jesse (see Is. xi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5, &c.), so that in His human nature He was as truly the son of David as in His divine nature He was the Son of God; and,

in accordance with this attestation of the Old Testament, the Gospel of St. Matthew opens its chronicle with the pointed preface, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham."

Further, there are passages in the Old Testament which combine the Divine and Human natures of our Lord almost in a breath. The consideration of this interesting class of prophecies we have reserved to the present occasion. Isaiah, in the second verse of the fourth chapter, a text which has already engaged our attention, speaks of the expected Messiah as the Branch of Jehovah, and then immediately adds, "and the fruit of the earth"—a figurative equivalent for the Son of Man. In like manner Jeremiah, in the twenty-third chapter, fifth and sixth verses, announces the Word of the Lord,—"I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a king shall reign and prosper. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely. And this is the name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness;" where the *King* of David's line is pronounced to be

Jehovah. It has been thought that a difficulty is thrown in the way of this interpretation by the thirty-third chapter, fifteenth and sixteenth verses, of this Prophet, and some controversy has arisen of late, and has found a place in some of our periodicals and newspapers, in consequence of certain remarks in high quarters in connection with our authorized translation of this passage.

We read in this place a repetition of the former prophecy in slightly modified terms, —"In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah shall be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith *She* shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness." It has been argued that the city has been honoured with this excellent name in a figure, as altars had been called Jehovah Nissi—"The LORD is my banner" (Ex. xvii. 15), and Jehovah Shalom (Judg. vi. 24)—"The LORD is peace;" and, as Ezekiel predicts of this city

also, that after the return of the Glory of God to her temple, she shall be called Jehovah Shammah—"The LORD is there" (xlviii. 35); that in like manner Messiah bears the name by way of figurative application. Others have explained this passage thus: that the city is the Bride, the Lamb's wife, and consequently bears both the name and the honours of her Bridegroom Lord; but there is no necessity either for this orthodox gloss, or for the Socinian evasion, as the cases alluded to are not parallel. You will mark that in the former quotation, Messiah is called "the righteous Branch," and in the latter "the Branch of righteousness." The pronoun rendered "*She*"—"*She* shall be called"—refers to, and takes its concord from the compound phrase—"the Branch of Righteousness," and does not apply to the city; and hence the translation should run thus,—"I will cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is the *name* wherewith it (the Branch of Righteous-

ness) shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness."[3]

Thus far we have proceeded in our investigation of the Ancient Scriptures that bear upon this doctrine, and their testimony is incontrovertible, although involving stupendous difficulties to those who lived before the Incarnation of the Lord had become history—difficulties, whose magnitude we cannot now conceive: that the Redeemer should be God and yet man—Jehovah, the Word and Wisdom, the Angel and Agent, and the Representative of the Father; yet the Son of Man, the persecuted, the pierced, the suffering, and the dying. This brings us to the centre of our subject, the solution of the divine enigma, the revelation of the mystery of God.

III. *The Incarnation.*—The two lines of prophecy which have been engaging our thoughts—the testimony to the Divine and Human Nature of the Coming One—permeate, like twin and parallel streams, the lengthy roll of the Old Testament Scriptures, from the fountain to the ocean; and can we not picture to ourselves the prophet and the

priest, in the mountain cell or in the chambers of the temple, poring over the problem, and baffled by its intricacies and seeming impossibility of solution, exclaiming, How can these things be? But at length the fulness of time was come that God, who had designed and alone could disclose the secret counsel of His will, unravelled the mystery that had puzzled and perplexed the intellects of angels in Heaven and saints on earth—"The Word was made flesh" (John i. 14)—"God sent forth His Son, made of a woman" (Gal. iv. 4)—Who, though being essentially in the form of God, thought not his equality with God a thing to be grasped at, as though it were not his own, but divested himself by taking on him the form of a servant, by becoming in the likeness of men (see Phil. ii. 6, 7).

Now, in seeking to define the manner of this mystery—the mode of union between the Divine and Human Natures in Our Blessed Lord—we must take heed what we say. The plain statements of Scripture and the undoubted inferences from Scripture must be our only guide. According to the

revelations made by Holy Writ, each nature —the Divine and the human—was whole and perfect, without confusion or commixtion of the one with the other, although united in the closest intimacy and linked together by the most indissoluble bond. He was truly God and truly Man. The confession of Thomas—"My Lord and my God" (John xx. 28) was the enunciation of sound doctrine, and not the expression of excitement, as unbelief has whispered: no less was the teaching of St. Paul a truth, that "the Mediator between God and man was Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5). He did not cease to be God because He took on Him our nature. The Word encased Himself in the clay of humanity—the Wisdom enrobed Himself in the vestments of flesh—the Son of God attired His Deity in the garb and the guise of the Son of Man. The fourteenth verse of the first chapter of St. John is the key-text of the mystery,—"The Word was made flesh, and tabernacled in us (*i.e.*, in our nature), and we gazed upon his glory, glory as being that of the only begotten from the Father." In these words of the

Evangelist we have a significant allusion to one of the most important types of the Old Testament,—the tabernacle of the congregation; the tent that Moses was commanded to construct in the wilderness, after the pattern showed to him in the mount. This type furnishes so graphic an illustration of the doctrine before us that we cannot forbear enlarging upon it. The ordinary impression made on the reader by the phrase "the tabernacle of the congregation" is that it was a tent at which the various tribes of Israel met together for worship, or, in other words, the congregation was composed of men and men only: whereas, if we turn to Exodus xxix. 42, 43, we find the following explanation,—"The tabernacle of the congregation, where *I* will *meet you* to speak there unto thee. And there *I will meet* with the children of Israel." And the meaning will be yet more apparent when we state that the words "*I will meet*" and "*congregation*" are kindred verb and noun, as though we read, "the tabernacle of the *meeting-place* where I will *meet* you;" so that this holy

tent was called by this name because *God* met his *people* there. What a striking type of the Saviour and the union of the two natures in His person bursts upon our view, as we inspect the mysteries of the tent of God! This tabernacle was an erection of human origin; its various parts, its pillars, stakes, and curtains, were the handiwork of man—it was man's property, man's building, an "earthly house of a tabernacle." Into this receptacle Jehovah descended, and fixed His presence there in the glory that shone upon the mercy-seat within the Holy of Holies, so that this earthly tabernacle became the dwelling-place of God. It was human, because built by man; divine, because God's presence was there—a marvellous shadowing forth of the mystery of the Person of the God-man, in whom the divine and human natures *meet* together: neither of them confounded with the other, yet joined together in everlasting oneness never to be severed. Such as the glory was to the tabernacle, such is the Deity of Christ to His humanity; and such as the tabernacle was to the glory, such is His humanity to

His Deity,—perfect God and perfect man. The Word was made flesh, and assumed our nature as His tabernacle.

But here one or two remarks are necessary to remove certain misapprehensions which are not only possible and probable but even commonly met with concerning the nature of the union of the two natures in our Lord. Jesus was not a man born into this world after the ordinary manner of the generation and birth of the children of men, on whom the divine nature descended, either at his baptism or at any previous period; for then the declaration of the angel to the Virgin would not have been true, "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke i. 35). Neither was the Divine nature, or the Word, in the place of the soul to Christ; for then He would have lacked the most necessary and important part of our system, nor could He have said of the Divine nature, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death" (Matt. xxvi. 38). Neither were there two persons in Christ, but two natures; otherwise the Crucified would have been but man, and

it could not have been said that the Church was bought with the blood of God (Acts xx. 28)—a reading, which after all the disputes which have arisen on this text, will stand its ground on the undoubted authority of manuscripts the most ancient and important.[4] Neither was the human nature transubstantiated or absorbed into the Divine, so that the Humanity ceased to be, and only Divinity remained: otherwise it would have been written, the flesh became the Word, and not as it is "the Word was made flesh" (John i. 14). Such a miracle would not have been the incarnation of God, but the divinizing of man; neither could it have been said that all judgment had been committed unto him, because he is the Son of Man" (John v. 22, 27). Thus the plain teaching of Holy Scripture is that our Blessed Lord was God and Man, perfect in His deity and perfect in His humanity. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. v. 19). He was, as the prophet had long before predicted, and the Evangelist explained, "Immanuel, God with us" (Isaiah vii. 14, and Matt. i. 23): a doctrine summarised in

the Creed called Athanasian,—"God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds, and Man of the substance of His mother, born in the world; who, although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ."

IV. Thus, we have examined the lineaments of Scripture testimony in their various phases and forms—the didactic, the prophetical, and the typical—and find that they all converge and meet in Christ. To sum up the result of our investigations at the present point. The Word which was in the beginning,—the Wisdom who was with God from all eternity,—the "I am in His bosom," —the Architect of the worlds of space and time,—the Angel of Jehovah,—the Revealer and express image of the Father,—in the fulness of time took on Him our nature in the womb of the Virgin Mary, "and was made man." Now, my brethren, gaze on "the Child born," and "the Son given,"—think on the pedigree and generation of that Babe of Bethlehem whose Advent we now celebrate. He is the Word of God incarnate, by whom the Father made the

worlds. Watch Him in His ministry,—"consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession,"—see Him walk along the path of tribulation, hedged in by enemies, assailed by the jealous Priests and Pharisees, scoffed at by the rulers, betrayed by a disciple, sold for the price of a slave, arrested by ruffians, dragged before Arch-priest and Procurator, blindfolded, buffeted, smitten, scourged, and spit upon. Against whom do those miscreants lift their lawless hands? Oh, fearful thought!—Against the Son of God. But look once more. The creatures of His hand pronounce sentence against Him, and condemn him to death. The cruelty of the rabble, like a swollen flood, now bursts all bounds. With maddened rage they rush upon Him,—along the crowded streets of the city, and up the hill of Calvary, weak with watching and fasting, and worn out with inner agony, they drag and drive their captive. Anon, they bind Him to the cross,—with merciless and murderous blows they hammer down His hands and feet, and rivet them with huge nails to the tree, and lift up the cross, and its bleeding, quivering burden

before the public gaze, to encounter the storms of reviling and the outpourings of malice and venom that surge like the mire and dirt cast up by the breakers of a troubled sea. Who is that sufferer?—think —Behold the Man! He is the Christ of God,—the Angel of the Covenant,—the co-eternal Wisdom of the Father. And why does He suffer these things? It is here that His Godhead shines forth even in the midst of this "hour of darkness." He dies as a sacrifice—the antitype of all the offerings of Levi—to make "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world;" that as the God-man he might obtain eternal redemption for us, and by death overcome death, and open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. And yet again he proved His deity, for He rose again the third day from the dead, by which He was "declared to be the Son of God with power;" for, having suffered in His body all that death could inflict, and in His soul the weight of the accumulated sins of the countless myriads of the sons of Adam, and the hiding of His

Father's face when He died as the substitute for sinners, and paid all the debt—the ten thousand talents due from us,—and exhausted all the penalty that justice could wring out, He takes to Himself his great power,—His resurrection strength; the chains of death are like the green withs on Samson's hands, and the portals of the grave are like the gates of Gaza. The Lord comes forth robed in majesty and might, the "Firstborn from the dead." Yet a little while, and He ascends in the glory-cloud—the royal chariot of heaven—to the right hand of the Father, to be our great High Priest, within the true Holy of Holies, until all the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and then shall the sign of the Son of Man be seen in the heavens, as He returns to establish the kingdom of eternity.

Again we beseech you, brethren, in solemn awe to reflect, what a Saviour is ours!—(1). How great a gift from the Father was his own dear Son! The thoughts of God from all eternity were fixed upon this plan to reconcile all things to Himself in Christ; and *He "so loved* the world, that He gave His

only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16).

(2). What a sacrifice was that on Calvary —the offering of Jehovah in the flesh! He must die before we could live. "He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). What value in the sufferings under which the Lord was bowed and broken!—what preciousness in that Blood which burst forth in living quickening streams from the wounds of Jesus the crucified!

(3). What efficacy, what power to save! Why should any of you be lost, seeing we have such a Saviour? Shall any sin be too great, too heinous, any crime so deep, so double-dyed, that this Blood cannot cleanse it? Shall any fire of unholy lust be so fierce that this Fountain cannot extinguish its fury? Any heart so hard that such love cannot melt or break it? Remember that Fountain was opened for the malefactor and the murderer as well as for the penitent and the saint; for the Jew, so long in his rebellion, as shall

be seen when "all Israel shall be saved;" for the Gentiles, so long alienated in their minds by wicked works, as shall be manifested when the "nations remember themselves and turn to the Lord;" for you and for me, and for every poor sinner that will cast himself on the sacrifice of Jesus. Oh, what tongue can tell of all the wealth of wisdom, mercy, and love treasured up in Christ Jesus for the sons of men? Taste and see how gracious the Lord is; bow beneath his sceptre, receive the atonement made by the Son of God and Son of Man, submit to be taught and trained, to be sanctified and sealed with the unction of His Holy Spirit, and become partakers of all the benefits of the stupendous mystery of grace unfolded in these words of our Lord, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world."

IV.

CHRIST IN THE FUTURE ETERNITY.

REVELATIONS XIX. 13.

"*His name is called the word of God.*"

TIME is a parenthesis between two eternities, regarded from man's point of view; but in the sight of God Eternity is one unbroken whole, the past and the future an abiding present. Man, although not capable under his present conditions of comprehending fully the state of absolute duration, yet is gifted, as being immortal, with a faculty of spirit whereby he can abstract his mind from the limitations of the life that now is, and feel his way into the regions of the unknown and unexplored. Revelation comes to the aid of this endowment of the mind, and casts a ray of light into the vast profound, and enables the inner eye to read a frag-

ment of the mysteries of the bygone and the yet-to-come. Man's position in this world may be compared to a traveller pursuing his pilgrimage by night across some mountain-pass. The path that lies immediately before his feet, and the objects almost within the reach of his hands, are with difficulty to be distinguished, and his conception of the more distant surroundings of that midnight walk is little better than the picturings of an active imagination or the delusions of a baseless dream. Yet, although his actual knowledge is so scant and limited, he inwardly yearns to push away the all-enveloping darkness, and delights to form conjectures and draw his own conclusions concerning the scenes that lie outstretched behind the veil. At length the sun arises, and the field of view expands. On either side the causeway he is treading, the traveller perceives an abyss so deep, so dark, that even the light of day does not penetrate or disclose the depthless recesses. So Revelation, like that morning sun rising on the pilgrim of the mountain, has unveiled to our sight some of the mysteries of the past and future eternity, although

many a secret thing remains that is—and ever must be — unfathomable to the ken and comprehension of finite faculties. Yet surely that man is not to be envied who rejects the measure of light and knowledge vouchsafed him from heaven, because he cannot unriddle every difficulty, or because he is forbidden to reduce the infinite to the finite, or to reconcile to the scant and narrow standard of the Creature the length and breadth and depth and height of the Being and attributes and actions of the Creator,— "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever" (Deut. xxix. 29).

Thus, having regard alike to the extent and limits of our knowledge, we have engaged, in the prosecution of our subject, taking the revelations of the Inspired Word as the light to our feet and the lamp to our paths. Already the curtain has been drawn aside, and we have caught a glimpse of the glories of the antecedent eternity, and beheld the co-existence of the Word with the Father in *the* beginning. Again, within the confines

of time, we have with unveiled eye, and face to face, gazed upon the birth, the death, the resurrection, and ascension of the Word made flesh. And now, yet further, the hand of the Almighty lifts the veil that shrouds the future age, and Revelation lights up the distant scene; and lo! no sooner do the glories of the eternity to come burst upon our vision, than our eyes are riveted again upon the same "that was from the beginning," the same in essence, the same in His assumed humanity, the same in His loving relations to mankind, unchanged and unchangeable. "His name is 'still' called the Word of God."

May the Holy Ghost anoint our eyes to see to the end of the mystery of Godliness!

I. Our subject to-day is Christ in the future eternity. We have already recalled to mind the chief points of our previous argument: that in the eternity that preceded the formation of the heavens and the earth, the Son of God was of "glory equal" and "majesty co-eternal" with the Father; that in time He was recognised by Patriarchs and Prophets, who were the recipients

of His revelations, and called by them the Angel of Jehovah, Jehovah, and God, as terms and titles of similar and interchangeable import; that He himself, when incarnate upon earth, claimed the name "I am;" and His Apostles taught that "every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 11).

Having rehearsed these points by way of supplying a connecting link between the conclusions already established and the subject that will engross our attention this morning, we proceed to assert that the disclosures of the future, as registered on the roll of prophecy, corroborate the testimony already adduced, and confirm the doctrine of the Deity of Jesus Christ. We shall not pause now to insist upon the evidence furnished in the pictures of the Apocalypse, which represent to us the session of Jesus on the throne with the Father, receiving the adoration of Angels and Saints in glory, wielding the sceptre and exercising the prerogatives of the Almighty, and bearing on his thigh the inscription, "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords," but will confine our

investigations to those terms which we have already considered as definitive of Deity. Are we told that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John i. 1), and that in the fulness of time, "the Word was made flesh"? (verse 14)—so, in the chapter which contains our text, do we behold the Lord Jesus in the act of unlocking the portals of the everlasting kingdom, distinguished by the name of the "Word of God."

Again, we have seen that the Angel of the Covenant was recognised as Jehovah; that it was He who announced that marvellous definition of essential Deity, "I am who am;" that the prophets applied this name to the coming Messiah; and when He became incarnate, and conversed with men, He assumed it as his own; and inspired writers of the New Testament paid Him the same honour, as tribute due to the Redeemer of the World. And when we enter the regions of futurity, and unfold the roll of the Apocalypse, the first chapter, which presents us with a general outline and panorama of the everlasting kingdom, describes the Lord

as returning on the glory-cloud, and we hear His voice as "the voice of many waters," declaring himself as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. i. 8); claiming for Himself, in this announcement, the name of Jehovah, and the attribute of Omnipotence, and identifying himself also with the God of the Pentateuch. And once more, when the whole of the prophecies of this Book shall have been fulfilled, when the things of time have passed away, the millenium have told out its years of triumph, and the last judgment have awarded the final destinies of all mankind, when the old heavens and earth have undergone the process of transfiguration, and the new heavens and earth been launched out upon the era of eternity, and all the work of redemption received the seal of completion, "It is done," the Almighty Agent of this wondrous regeneration issues the same proclamation to the subjects of the abiding city, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end" (Rev. xxi. 6). Thus the Holy Scripture, from the first page

to the last, has supplied the plainest evidence, if words are to be regarded as the vehicles and expounders of facts, that Jesus Christ is God.

II. We saw last Sunday that the Eternal Word took on Him our nature, and spread the canvas of humanity, as a tabernacle, over and around His Deity; that in our flesh He died, in our flesh rose again, and in our flesh ascended to His Father and our Father, His God and our God. Now we assert that that association of Humanity with Deity shall never be sundered or cease; that He who condescended to enfold Himself in our flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, shall never divest himself of that garment, but to all eternity shall remain the God-Man, Christ Jesus. Thus, in the fifth chapter of the Revelation, we read that in the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne, the Seer beheld a book sealed with seven seals, and heard a challenge made in the courts of heaven, Who is worthy to open and read the roll? and he wept much, because none was found worthy to break those seals and unlock the hidden mysteries.

Then said one of the Elders to the Seer, "Weep not; the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed." All the figures of speech here employed denote the manhood of the Lord: the first, "the lion," is derived from Jacob's dying blessing on his son Judah (Gen. xlix. 9), and a reminiscence of this prophecy was preserved in the symbol wrought upon the escutcheon of the royal tribe; and the second, "the root of David," furnishes the interpretation of the emblem,—the *root*, not as commonly explained, the root from which David sprung, but David's root from which Messiah came according to the flesh. Thus on the very threshold and vestibule of eternity, when in the act of unsealing the last mysteries, we recognise the Son of Man, to whom all judgment is given, and we read the title of his birthright and the inscription on the cross, engraved upon His throne,—"the root of David," which being interpreted is "the King of the Jews." And, to carry out the same line of comparison pursued hitherto, if we consult the twenty-second chapter we are invited to gaze upon a picture of the full

and final blessings of redemption, painted in colours that delight and dazzle with their unearthly splendour; and while we are lost in adoring amazement at the vision, we hear an invitation and appeal based upon these blessings,—an invitation that swells with the overflowings of love, an appeal that touches with its tenderness and the largeness of the divine generosity, "Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely (verse 17.) We gaze upon the title deed that secures to us the everlasting inheritance, with its river and tree that quicken, and its glories that shall never fade or fail; and the same signature ratifies the covenant of eternity, bearing the impress of the union of the Divine and Human natures in the Giver,—the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last," declares Himself again to be the root and the offspring of David (verses 13, 16).

But there is another text to which we would ask you to give your thoughtful consideration—a text whose stand-point is beyond the limits of time, and within the precints of eternity—a text that forms

the last link of a lengthy line of testimony. You will call to memory the type furnished in the "tabernacle of the congregation," and the symbolism of the union of the Divine and Human natures in our Lord. You will also remember that the great truth that was represented by the Holy tent in outward and visible sign, was also taught by Isaiah in prophetic strain, —that the Virgin-born should be "God with us;" and that the Evangelists recorded the fulfilment of both the type and prophecy in the birth of Jesus Immanuel—the Word made flesh. If we turn once more to the Apocalypse (xxi. 23), the vision of the New Creation is again before our eyes. We see in spirit "the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven;" and as her bridal deckings—for she is the wife of the Lamb—excite our wonderment, we hear a great voice out of heaven, saying—"Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people." And mark, the words rightly arranged will read —"God with them Himself, shall be their

God."[1] The Tabernacle of the Wilderness here finds its counterpart in the Shechinah or dwelling-place of God, that shall be established amongst the saved; and the King of the heavenly city is revealed as Immanuel "God with us"—for ever and ever. Then shall man's happiness be restored and completed; that happiness which existed in Paradise when man walked with God,—and God conversed with man. The Fall interrupted this relationship between the creature and the Creator, and no real joy could exist till that missing link was replaced: hence the promise of a Redeemer was given and fulfilled in a higher and closer way than Angels or men could have anticipated. The Word was made flesh, and Himself became the link between Godhead and manhood, and effected the Atonement,—the at-one-ment between God and man.

III. Having thus proved the Deity of our Lord, and the Humanity of our Lord, and the union and co-existence of the two natures throughout the coming eternity, it may be profitable to consider some of the

offices which the Redeemer appears to sustain in the realms of glory.

(1). The most frequent and familiar symbol of the Lord in the Apocalypse is that of the *Lamb*. We could conceive, even without a revelation to that effect, that the Lord Jesus, when sitting on the throne of His glory as King of kings and Lord of lords, would give some manifestation of His Godhead that would render His Deity intelligible to His creatures under some form or fashion of which glory and light, and the sparklings of heaven's jewelry are but figures borrowed from our earthly experiences, and adopted in condescension to our weakness to represent to our minds that state of ineffable blessedness which eye hath not seen or heart conceived. Further, we could entertain the thought that the Lord would also maintain the appearance of Man, not only from the fact of His having taken the manhood into God, but also because He is the second Adam, the federal Head and representative of His people. He was clothed in the human nature when He achieved His victory on earth: it would seem a necessary

consequence that in that nature also He should celebrate His triumph in heaven. But the symbol of the Lamb is a touching vision; it startles by its very tenderness. It tells of the lowly Jesus in His humiliation, in His sacrificial character as the atoning sufferer for our sins, for it speaks of the Lamb as slain. Yes, the scars of the wounds are there! the hand that wields the sceptre of the universe still bears the mark of the nail that pierced it, and the foot that rests upon the pavement of sapphire stone retains the evidence of the crucifixion. The Father will ever gaze upon those indelible mementoes of the sacrifice of His Son, and the satisfaction made by Him for the saved. And the saved—oh, marvellous thought!—shall see the fountain head from which the blood that cleansed and quickened them gushed forth, and shall read in those scars the charter of their salvation; and the sight of the Lamb slain, still seamed with the scars of sacrifice, shall fire the heart and let loose the tongue of the multitude that no man can number, and they shall rend the very heavens with the peal of praise,—"Worthy

is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!" "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever. Amen."

(2). Further, it would appear that the Lord Jesus Christ will ever be the Revealer of the Father to his creatures. Whatever heights of knowledge we may be able to scale, or whatever depths of divine mysteries we may be conditioned to fathom in the eternal world, our enlightenment will come to us through the Lord Jesus Christ. This truth seems to be conveyed to us in Rev. xxi. 23, where, expatiating upon the glories of the heavenly Jerusalem, the Seer has recorded, in his prophetic Vision, that "the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." In the beginning it was the first utterance of the creative "God said," at which light leaped out of the womb of darkness; and St. John designedly made the introduction to his Gospel a parallel to

the preface of the Pentateuch, and said of the same creative Word, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men, and the light shineth in the darkness" (i. 4, 5). And again, "The true light that should come into the world was that which lighteth every man"[2] (verse 9). And, consistently with these precedents, we find in this passage of the Apocalypse the same office of enlightening associated with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. But the teaching of this text is more special than appears at first sight. We are told that the glory of God lighted the city—was the cause of its illumination —and the Lamb was the light, or rather the torch or lamp,[2] thereof.

Now a lamp bears, conducts and transmits light. The sun, in or around which the primæval light was gathered and concentrated, is the Great Lamp of the system, of which that glorious orb is the centre; and so, in like manner, shall the Lord Jesus, "the Sun of Righteousness," be the central focus in the new creation, in whom all the light of the Godhead shall dwell, and from whose face the glories of the Godhead shall

be radiated on the redeemed for ever. It was an article of faith in the Jewish Creed, that when Messiah came he would restore to His people the Shechinah, or visible glory of God, that sent forth its heavenly sparklings in the Holy of Holies behind the veil, and was withdrawn from the temple, as Ezekiel's visions teach us, at the period of the Babylonish captivity. This chapter of the Apocalypse appears to reveal the fulfilment of this hope of Israel, of which also the Transfiguration was a type and promise: the Shechinah shall rest upon the Lord Jesus, as on the holy mount, when "His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light;" and its rays, like a royal robe shall overspread and invest the redeemed as the bright cloud enfolded Moses and Elijah in its embrace. Thus in the face of Jesus shall the beatific vision of the glory of the Father be revealed and reflected; for the Lamb, who once died for us, shall be the Lamp of God, and the Sun and centre of the city of the saved.

(3). Once more, in this chapter, which unfolds the magnificence of the eternal world

and "brings all heaven before our eyes," we are told that there shall be no temple within the walls of "the city that lieth foursquare." At first this announcement seems startling, as a city on earth without a temple or church where God is worshipped would be to the believer a wilderness, though its walls rested on jasper and amethyst, and its pavement glittered with wrought-gold; but the seeming deficiency is more than compensated when we learn that "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (verse 22). Now a temple is a place where God dwelleth: hence, as God dwells in Christ, and Christ in us by His Holy Spirit, Christians are called the temple of God (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17). But here the figure is reversed, for God and the Lamb are spoken of as the Temple of the saved. We infer, therefore, that the petition in our Saviour's last great prayer for His people before His sufferings is here anwered and fulfilled,—"That they also may be one in us" (John xvii. 21). If this be the true explanation of the mystery, what a future is before the people of God! Words fail to

give utterance to the thoughts that burn within the soul. Christ has found his tabernacle and his temple in us now, and through Him the Father hath come and dwelt with us; but then we shall find our tabernacle and our temple in Christ, and through Him in the Father; and so in this heavenly and inconceivable habitation of man with the Most High, according to the words of St. Paul, we "shall be filled up into all the fulness of God" (Eph. iii. 19).

And, my brethren, do not fail to mark that this inheritance of Glory, and this temple of Deity, in which the saved shall find their everlasting home, are associated with our Lord under the symbol of the Lamb, to keep us in memory, throughout eternity, that the light of life and the glories of the kingdom, and the indwelling in the bosom of the Father, are the rewards given to Christ for His sufferings, and the results of the purchase made by the blood of the Lamb. The cross of Jesus is the ladder by which we climb to the crown of Glory, and the ascent by which we mount to the bosom *of* our Father in heaven.

There is one text which may appear to some to suggest a difficulty, or even to convey a contradiction to some of the statements that have been advanced; it may be well, therefore, to cast a glance upon it before we close our subject. I refer to 1 Cor. xv. 28—"And when all things shall be subdued unto Him (the Son), then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." The period referred to by the Apostle in this place is, I conceive, the final hour of triumph coeval with the creation of the new heavens and earth, when all the glorious work of redemption shall have been fully accomplished, when every enemy has been brought into subjection, sin and death vanquished, and Satan banished from the earth, and bound in "the lake that burneth." When all the Saints shall be perfect and complete; when the straying sheep of Christ's flock have been recovered, the lost treasure found, and the prodigal pardoned; the sealed of the Sons of Israel saved, and the multitude which no man can number admitted into glory, and all

the children of God of every dispensation housed in the many habitations of heaven, then shall the Son, having accomplished all things, hand over and present the kingdom to the Father, that He may accept and acknowledge the travail of His Son's soul as His own dominion for ever. The purpose planned before the foundation of the world was laid, has been accomplished—the dispensations mediated, and everlasting reconciliation effected—God and man are at one for ever. There is no comparison here instituted between the Father and the Son with reference to the Godhead, but between the *offices* of each person in the scheme of redemption—the One as sending and the Other as sent; and the work of man's salvation as being in progress, and as being perfected.

The end for which the Word was made flesh is consummated, and He therefore returns to the throne of the Father from which He stooped—there is no alteration in His divine or Human nature. He is not said to reassume the one or divest Himself of the other, seeing that He never ceased to *be God,* and never will cease to be man.

The purpose and object of His work alone finds place—the offended God and the offending man are reconciled, and the Advocate lays aside His office, as his pleadings have prevailed, and the conquered and recovered realm is presented by the Son to the Father who sent Him to achieve the victory: hence we consider this passage as being parallel to those we have already noticed, where Christ is represented as co-assessor with His Father on His throne, and receiving as One with the Father the homage and everlasting praise of the ransomed and the glorified.

Thus have we traced out some few of the lines of testimony that penetrate and pervade the length and breadth of the Inspired Word concerning the Being and Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. One feature in our inquiry cannot fail to have arrested our attention, the unity of thought and sentiment that is everywhere apparent in the Holy Scriptures. Although these writings extend over a vast period, and were the product of divers pens, yet their utterances are uniform, and the witness one and the same, from the Pentateuch to the Apoca-

lypse; and the only inference that we can draw from such an agreement is that there was one great superintending Mind who was the true Author of the Bible, who foresaw the end from the beginning, and framed His revelations to mankind in accordance with his prescience.

And, to sum up, What is the testimony of the Scriptures? In a word, it is the revelation of Jesus Christ: an unfolding of His eternity, a preparation for His advent and incarnation, a history of His acts and agonies, a narrative of His death and resurrection, and a prophecy of His second coming and everlasting kingdom. Thus we have examined passages that reveal the co-existence with the Father of the Word and Wisdom in the furthest depths of an eternity gone by. We have witnessed the utterance of that Word, and seen angels, and principalities, and powers, in obedience to the call, start into being; suns and stars fastened on their hinges, and planets and worlds let loose to wheel upon their orbits. We have analysed the source of our own existence, and learned that man was the product of the counsel

taken by the Father with the Word; have seen Him assume the office of Guardian Angel to the people of His choice; have beheld Him stoop from the throne of Omnipotence and veil His glories in humanity, and appear on earth as the Virgin-born; have watched Him dying, and rising again, and gazed on Him ascending till the glory cloud encircled Him, and hid him from our earthly sight; have traced His steps within the veil of a future eternity, and seen the true Holy of Holies lighted up with the presence of Him who is the Word of God, the "I am," the root of David, the Lamb that was slain, the Temple, and the Lamp of the heavenly city, and the Co-assessor with the Father on the throne of the everlasting kingdom. In all things He hath the pre-eminence: in time and in eternity, in creation and in grace, in heaven above and earth beneath; in the language of the Psalmist (Psalm cxlv. 13), "His Kingdom is a kingdom of all eternities," all ages, all dispensations; and by Him, and for Him, they all consist. And, as we are thus led to meditate upon the witness which God hath testified of His Son, the greatness

and the glory of Him, "who is, and who was, and who is to come," the words of Moses the man of God, which we have joined in reading this morning, sink into our hearts as an article of faith, and his confession leaps upon our lips: "From eternity to eternity Thou art God" (Psalm xc. 2).

A word in conclusion. (1). I can understand the possibility of a man rejecting the Bible altogether, refusing to admit its testimony, or bow to its authority as a supernatural revelation from heaven. I can understand the possibility of such an one preferring the dim glimmerings of a lifeless deism gathered from his own observations of the operations and processes of nature, to the clear light reflected by the Word; or further, I can draw upon my imagination and picture to my mind a so-called philosopher even denying the existence of any personal President over the universe, and referring the existence of all the wonders that are above us and beneath us, to the chemical, electric, and transforming agencies of matter as their ultimate and necessary cause. But *there* is a mystery which I cannot solve or

understand, which is, alas, sometimes presented to our view, of a man reading the Scriptures and admitting their testimony as authoritative, and yet not recognizing the truth of the doctrines with which we have been dealing—the Personality, the Deity, and the Eternity of the Son of God.

(2). But, further, a man may allow these doctrines to be true, as he would a proposition in mathematics which he had seen worked out and proved: he admits that the arguments adduced are unquestionable, and the conclusion arrived at beyond the reach of contradiction or controversy; yet his heart may remain uninfluenced by the evidence, and unenlightened by the revelation.—"No man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost:" the power of the Highest must rest upon us, to make these doctrines within us a faith that quickens and a creed that saves.

(3). Let us examine ourselves, then, my brethren. Has the Spirit of God given us high and exalted views of Jesus Christ,—of His dignity, His deity, and, consequently, of the stupendousness of the mystery of His Incarnation, of the value of His sufferings and

the sacrifice made by Him for our sins? Has the "Guide into all truth" led us to the cross and the sprinkling of the Blood? Has He linked us to the Lord by the bands of an everlasting covenant, and set on us—on our bodies and souls—the seal of sanctification, which is at once the evidence and the foretaste of future glory? Are we looking for and hastening unto the coming of the Lord, and longing for His second Advent and the consummation of His eternal purposes, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection unto life and glory? And as the Spirit cries to the still-absent Jesus, "Come," and the Church, longing for her bridal day, gives utterance to her inner yearnings, and echoes the ejaculation, "Come," do our hearts individually catch up the strain, and adopt it as our own prayer,—our real, earnest, and, I had almost said, impatient prayer,—"Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Amen."?

NOTES.

NOTES TO SERMON I.

[1] "Beget."—The Hebrew word here commented on, קנה, is reproduced in the Greek *γέν-ος, γεν-νάω, γίν-ομαι*; and in the Latin *gen-ui, gen-us, gen-eratio, gn-atus*, as well as in the English words mentioned in the text.

[2] "I proceeded," נִסַּכְתִּי.—The LXX. interpret this word as if it had been נוֹסַדְתִּי, *ἐθεμελίωσέν με*, "He founded me." Some critics would vary the pointing, and read נְסַכְתִּי from סכך, and render, "I was woven or wrought." In difficult words how far better it is to abide by the literal meaning. נסך signifies to "pour," in the Niphal, "to be poured," so the Versio Veneta reads *κέκυμαι*, "I was poured out." Surely this is the true interpretation, and the eternal begetment or procession of the Son is here referred to.

[3] "Day and Day," literally "day—day."—The days of creation in Genesis i. are undoubtedly alluded to in this place.

[4] "A kingdom of all eternities," מלכות כל־עלמים.—This is but imperfectly rendered "everlasting kingdom" in our version; the original seems to comprehend the idea of all the stages and periods of eternity and time, past, present, and future.

[5] "The king of the eternities," *τῷ Βασιλεῖ τῶν αἰώνων*.—This seem to be a reference, almost a quotation, of the passage referred to in the former note. The æons of the Greek seem to be a reproduction of the Olams of the Hebrew, and both to refer to the "days" of the eternal duration, and not *merely* to the dispensations of time.

NOTES TO SERMON II.

[1] ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον κ. τ. λ.—The article and the participle ὁ ὤν define the proper and native residence of the Son in the bosom of the Father—His eternal home and dwelling-place. In like manner, the Lord when speaking to Nicodemus (iii. 13), though standing on the earth could use this same phrase, "the Son of Man, which is (ὁ ὤν) in heaven."

[2] The Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. of the fourth century read μονογενὴς θεός, "only begotten God." The Codex Ephraemi of the 6th century, and the Codex Regius of the 8th century present the same reading. It appears also in the Syriac version, made at an early date, and in other less important versions; and it has the support of a large number of the Greek Fathers, among whom may be mentioned Theodotus, Clement of Alexandria, Didymus, and Epiphanius. There are also some of the Latin Fathers who have this reading.

The Alexandrine MS. of the 5th century, and all the later ones have the other reading—υἱός, Son. This is found also in the Latin Vulgate, and most of the Latin Fathers. Irenæus, Origen, Eusebius, and Basil seem to have used both readings. See the introductions of Scrivener and Tregelles, Alford's Greek Testament, &c.

[3] A difficulty has been felt in identifying Michael with the Pre-incarnate Lord in consequence of Jude, 9; but this will vanish when we reflect that the very words of Michael in that passage are found in the mouth of the Angel of Jehovah in Zech. iii. 2. Moreover, if we reject the theory that Jude alludes to the Rabbinic fable of Michael watching the tomb of Moses, and refer the phrase "Moses' body" to the Old Testament Church, as the New Testament Church is the body of Christ, we shall see the true explanation of a difficult passage, and also the identity *of Michael* with Messiah.

NOTES TO SERMON III.

[1] Genesis iv. 1. קניתי איש את יהוה.—A great difference of opinion has existed amongst critics as to the force of the particle את "from" in this passage: the LXX. rendered the clause *διὰ τοῦ θεοῦ*, "by the aid of God;" the Latin Vulgate, in like manner, *per deum;* Rashi regarded את as equivalent to עם, with, "in association with;" Gesenius and Tremellius as מאת, "from with;" Clericus took the same view, which is that of the English version; Knobel interprets it "with the help of Jehovah;" so also do Keil and Delitzsch; Lange suggests, "a man who stands in connection with Jehovah; but surely when we read in the preceding clause that Eve bore את קין Cain, the particle must have the same force in the latter as in the former clause. The ordinary use of this particle is to emphasize the object with which it stands connected, so that the natural interpretation is that of Luther, "I have begotten a man, Jehovah, or the very One that should come."

[2] "In my Father's house." *ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός μου.* This is allowed to be the best translation of the words, and most suited to the demands of the context.

[3] צמח "branch" in Hebrew is masculine; but as צדקה "righteousness," is feminine, which is attached to it, the compound idea is regarded as feminine; hence we have the pronoun לָהּ in the feminine instead of לוֹ in the masculine. The reading לוֹ is, however, found in three MSS. The Syriac, the Targum, and the Antwerp polyglot point לָהּ as masculine; and the Latin Vulgate has "eum," *him.* All this shows that it was felt that the reference must be to Messiah, and not to the city. The explanation given above is to be preferred, see Blunt's 'Duties of the Parish Priest,' p. 44.

[4] The reading Θεοῦ "God," in Acts xx. 20, 28, is sup-

ported by the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS., the Latin Vulgate and the Syriac. Κυρίου "Lord," is the reading of the MSS. A C D E, and some of the Versions. Ignatius, Epiphanius, Ambrose, Tertullian, &c., cite the former reading; and Augustine, Jerome, Eusebius, &c., the latter.

The difficulty of the reading "God" is a strong proof of its genuineness; and the style of St. Paul, who, in ten places uses the phrase "the church of God," but never the church of the Lord, is decisive.

NOTES TO SERMON IV.

[1] Rev. xxi. 3. In the last clause of this verse there is a plain reference to the name Emmanuel, Καὶ *αὐτὸς ὁ Θεὸς μετ' αὐτῶν ἔσται, αὐτῶν θεός.* Alford's translation and note on this passage run thus:—"And He shall be God with them (the name Emmanuel, *μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ θεός*, first then being realized in its full significance), their God, so the ancient promises are fulfilled," &c. I should prefer, however, rendering the passage,—"And God with them Himself, *i.e.* Emmanuel Himself, shall be their God."

[2] "By coming into the world," John i. 9.—The whole verse runs thus:—*ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον, ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον.* There is some doubt how the last clause should be connected with the former part of the verse; the E. V. refers it to "every man," but St. John always uses this phrase, both in his Gospel and Epistles, of the Lord Jesus Christ; and we have already seen that "He that should come" is a synonym of Messiah. It would appear more consistent every way, and this is now generally admitted, to connect *ἐρχόμενον* "that

cometh" with τὸ φῶς "the light;" but three several different renderings are practicable. (1) That was the true light which lighteth every man at its coming, &c. This will hardly stand as the Evangelist has shown, that the life and light were in Christ from all eternity. (2) "The true light which lighteth every man came into the world"—uniting, ἦν "was," with ἐρχόμενον, "coming," "was coming," or "came." This is the view taken by Alford, but it is open to more than one objection. (3) It is best to regard ἐρχόμενον—"that cometh," as the well-known title of the Messiah, and render "the true light, that should come into the world, was that which lighteth every man," or "the true light was that which lighteth every man, by coming into the world." The former of these is preferable.

[3] In the original the distinction referred to in the text is very apparent,—

Ἡ γὰρ δόξα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐφώτισεν αὐτήν, καὶ ὁ λύχνος αὐτῆς τὸ ἀρνίον.

THE END.

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